

MYTHICAL ANCESTRY IN
WORLD CULTURES,
1400–1800

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MYTHICAL ANCESTRY IN
WORLD CULTURES,
1400–1800

Edited by

Sara Trevisan



BREPOLS

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INTRODUCTION: MYTHICAL ANCESTRY AND GENEALOGY

Sara Trevisan

This volume is the first comparative study of mythical ancestry as a global phenomenon. From Western Europe to the Ottoman Empire, from Inca Peru to Mughal India, the essays in this volume will explore why we so often find rulers or peoples placing non-historical and non-biological ancestors in their genealogies.¹ How did individuals and communities define their own identities through genealogical discourse? How did these cultures think of themselves as related to their mythical past? How seriously were these various claims of mythical descent taken?

Anthropologists and social scientists have used the ‘genealogical method’ to study the meaning and function of historical ancestors and to understand how some communities have traditionally constructed their sense of identity through kin ties.² In societies centred around descent groups, genealogies are usually ‘the most common expression of social relationships and control’; and it is in societies which possess ‘some recognizable form of central control or mnemonic devices for remembering the past’ that the greatest efforts are made ‘to create or remember a

¹ By ‘non-historical’, it is here meant ancestors who never existed historically, whereas ‘non-biological’ refers to ancestors who did historically exist but from whom it is not historically accurate to claim descent.

² This method was first put forward by Rivers, ‘The Genealogical Method of Anthropological Inquiry’, pp. 1–12. For further discussion about genealogy and social sciences, see Jean-Paul Zuniga’s essay in this volume.

Sara Trevisan, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Warwick

continuous past, from the most remote period to the present'.³ Since there is usually no solid evidence for ancient forefathers, such genealogies are often integrated with non-historical ancestors.

Genealogy rests on links that are biological and historical, as they trace the branches of a family tree and reconstruct the kinship between individuals related to one another by means of filiation or marriage union. Yet, genealogy can also be socially constructed and mythical, presenting links between forefathers and their descendants rooted in artificial constructs as part of an attempt to create the appearance of biological and historical linearity and kinship where there are none.⁴ In pre-modern societies and the early modern ones which inherited these practices, claims for high status or political or ethnic power often rested on 'a presumed biological link with a hero, a founder or even a deity' — who had usually lived in remote times and whose memory lingered in oral traditions — and on the prestige and privilege derived from this ancestor.⁵ Often imbued with prophetic elements, this mythical ancestry contributed to 'shape the imagined past and project a glorious future', also providing new interpretations of the present political situation.⁶

Non-historical ancestors thus inhabit the intersection between biological and non-biological kinship. To define the presence or absence of blood ties within a genealogy, anthropologists and social scientists have employed the term 'fictive' in opposition not to 'historical' but to 'real' kinship. This reveals two dimensions to ancestry and genealogy: 'on the one hand, that which highlights blood ties, on the other hand that which depends on ties that are invented, sometimes simulated, more frequently created by relations of a spiritual order'.⁷ Some anthropologists, including Émile Durkheim, have separated kinship and consanguinity, associating the former with mythical discourse as an ideological justification *a posteriori* which can express but not explain non-consanguineal relations within a social

³ Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition*, p. 4.

⁴ See Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies*; Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres*; Barthélémy and Pingaud, *La généalogie entre science et passion*.

⁵ Smith, *Myths and Memories*, pp. 57–58.

⁶ Radulescu and Kennedy, 'Introduction', p. 3.

⁷ Redondo, 'Introduction', p. 6: '[d]'une côté, celui qui relève des liens du sang, de l'autre celui qui dépend des liens inventés, parfois simulés, plus fréquemment créés par des relations d'ordre spirituel'. Smith calls these 'biological' and 'cultural-ideological' (*Myths and Memories*, pp. 57–58). In anthropology, 'fictive kinship' is 'the extension of kinship obligations and relationships to individuals specifically not otherwise included in the kinship universe'. Quoted in Quirko, 'Fictive Kinship', p. 310.

group.⁸ Whilst it cannot explain descent through evidence in the modern sense, mythical discourse can nevertheless boast great authority as it offers an explanation grounded, as it were, on the authority of myth itself; the authority of a myth is in turn determined by the tradition of the whole community which believes in the myth.⁹

In his seminal investigation of mythical genealogies as historiographic texts in early modern Europe — the only comparative work on the subject to date — Roberto Bizzocchi has highlighted the cultural implications of a comparison and interaction between the historiographic authority of pre-modern and early modern mythical kinship for the definition of identity and the evidence-based authority required by modern historiography: ‘what we cannot [...] accept from the authors of incredible [mythical] genealogies is the predetermination of their answers. This is what differentiates us from them, not the use of documents’.¹⁰ The ‘presumption’ of truth — that is, the assumption of historicity and reality without solid evidence — and the presupposition of kin ties which are not real, are crucial questions in the present volume.

The focus of this collection is on the early modern period, an age in which the mythical culture of pre-modern origins and the developing philological and evidence-based historiographic method came to meet and interact in Europe and beyond. Although the predominant Eurocentric perspective in early modern studies has encouraged a focus on Greco-Roman mythology and biblical ancestors,¹¹ the use of mythical ancestry and genealogy, as this volume will show, was shared along similar lines by other non-European cultures, a legacy that was at times influenced by European political and cultural colonialism.

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Japan, during the Tokugawa shogunate, the state systematically encouraged the compilation of family history in genealogical form.¹² Elite families as well as the wealthy landowning and mercantile classes were often visited in their countryside homes by people who manufactured

⁸ Porquieres, ‘Religion et parenté dans *Les formes élémentaires*’, p. 418; Dumville, ‘Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, p. 74.

⁹ Van Baaren, ‘The Flexibility of Myth’, p. 223.

¹⁰ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, pp. 208–09: ‘ciò che noi [...] non condividiamo con gli autori di genealogie incredibili è la predeterminazione delle risposte. Ma è proprio questo che ci distingue da loro, non l’uso dei documenti’.

¹¹ See Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas* and Redondo, ed., *Les parentés fictives en Espagne*.

¹² Selinger, *Authorizing the Shogunate*, pp. 22–23.

mythical genealogies for them, reaching back to time immemorial, and even the samurai elites traced their ancestry back to the medieval Minamoto clan, and eventually to the emperor's line.¹³ In early seventeenth-century China, the Jesuit Nicolas Trigault wrote that the Wanli Emperor worshipped no other God than himself as well as deified ancestors in his line.¹⁴ In South Asia, 'it was common practice for the kings to claim their descent from divine or charismatic figures in order that their subjects might accept their own extraordinary status'; for instance, Himalayan Buddhist dynasties traced their ancestry to the Buddha and the Sakya clan.¹⁵ Like Western European monarchs, Ottoman Sultans rooted their ancestry in Adam, the first prophet, through a long list of mythical figures. In India, the caste of the Vahivancās recorded the genealogies of their patrons: these included a mythical section, with accounts of the origins of the world drawn from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, as well as elements borrowed from the oral tradition of another caste, the Bhats.¹⁶

All these early modern cultures employed mythical ancestry to ground the identity of an individual or a group in the prestige of remote antiquity. To extend their genealogies and fill the inevitable gaps in the timeline, they had to include numerous non-historical forefathers; the result was a syncretic grid of descent encompassing mythical deities, heroes, and rulers from sundry traditions.

The most common ways in which pre-modern and, by inheritance, early modern societies 'recruited' mythical ancestors into historical pedigrees were euhemerism, genealogical 'parasitism' with other lineages, fabrication, and etymology.¹⁷ In the medieval and early modern period, euhemerized deities and heroes — humans who had died and come to be worshipped for their excellence and virtues through myth and the passage of time¹⁸ — were employed in 'ethnogenic' stories in order to trace the ancestry of peoples or individuals.¹⁹ For instance, European monarchies and nations rooted their ancestry in the Trojan refugees descended from Aeneas and, ultimately, Venus, or in heroic demi-gods like Hercules. A similar phenomenon can be found in non-European cultures; in the Mughal Empire, Chingis Khan

¹³ Sato, 'A Social History of Japanese Historical Writing', pp. 98–99.

¹⁴ Trigault, *Due lettere annue*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Okita, *Hindu Theology*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Shah and Shroff, 'The Vahivancā Bārōts of Gujarat', pp. 256–57.

¹⁷ These categories are drawn from Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition*, pp. 41–42.

¹⁸ Cooke, 'Euhemerism', pp. 399, 401.

¹⁹ Alphandéry, 'L'Évhémérisme et les débuts de l'histoire des religions au moyen âge', p. 10.

was styled as a late descendant of a legendary, human mother, Alan Qo'a, who conceived him through a resplendent golden man.²⁰

Genealogical parasitism occurred when an individual or a community sought to affirm non-existent kin ties with important historical or non-historical figures belonging to other lineages and desired for their prestige and virtue. In seventeenth-century Muslim Egypt, the Circassian chieftain Ridvan Bey planted his descent into that of the Ghassanid King Jabala, as well as in that of the Quraysh, the northern Arabian tribal alliance to which the Prophet Muhammad belonged. Similarly, the Scottish King James VI knew that, after his accession to the throne of England as James I, his pedigree should include a descent from the ancient British-Welsh kings of Trojan origins — the traditional mythical ancestors of the kings of England. Many of these ancestors were not only of uncertain historical status but even fabricated, from the Pharamond of the kings of France to some ancient Inca rulers.

Another important instrument for the construction of mythical ancestry was etymology. Especially in Judeo-Christian culture, etymology was understood as carrying the origin of words, hence of their referent — a principle transposed to biological origins through the medium of genealogy.²¹ Fundamental was the use of eponymy, with mythical ancestors bearing a name blending lexical and biological origins (e.g. Francus for the Franks), in order to present the past as 'a national political expression'.²²

The present volume explores the complex nature of genealogy and mythical ancestry in early modern world cultures, embracing matters relating to dynastic legitimacy, nationalism, social and legal status, and race. For one, the mythical ancestry of kings had a special historiographic and political value in early modern European and non-European cultures. These societies shared a reliance on origin myths linking the birth of the dynastic line with that of the political state, whereby the history of the nation, its royal line, and community were joined in 'a narrative controlled by dynastic rather than annalistic or calendar time'.²³ Legitimacy was strengthened by the antiquity of the lineage, and antiquity depended in turn on a universal historiography connecting the present and the remote past of civilizations in genealogical form. As it sought to trace the descent of an individual or a community, it created historical links through

²⁰ Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality*, p. 37.

²¹ Rothstein, 'Etymology, Genealogy, and the Immutability of Origins', pp. 332–34.

²² Borchardt, 'Etymology in Tradition and in the Northern Renaissance', p. 429.

²³ Spiegel, 'Genealogy', p. 50.

figures drawn from sundry historical, cultural, and literary traditions. European monarchs appropriated syncretic myths of medieval origins for the celebration of their legitimacy in narrative and visual form.²⁴ In her contribution to this volume, Ewa Kociszewska explores this question by considering how the celebration of the Trojan descent of the French kings, which was encouraged by Charles IX in response to its imperial appropriation by the Habsburg dynasty, was overlooked by the heirless Henry III and left aside by Henry IV of Navarre in favour of the more nationalist myth of the Gallic Hercules.

The underlying ideology linking ancient with mythical lineage and legitimate power was the concept of *translatio imperii*. In its most abstract definition, the passage of imperial power from one great empire to another created a fictive kinship between present and past rulers, grounded in shared mythical ancestors seen as repositories of virtues to be imitated.²⁵ In her chapter, Lisa Balabanlilar discusses how the Chingisids, Timurids, and Mughals shared a single genealogical narrative traced to Chingis Khan, which they continued to manipulate in the course of the centuries to legitimize their rule through the prestige of revered ancestors. Thanks to this socially-constructed kinship, these rulers were endowed not only with political power but also with the necessary ancient virtues which made them suitable to govern.

A fundamental instrument for the definition and normalization of mythical ancestry within the genealogies of individuals and communities was the genealogical tree. The syncretism of the sundry mythical ancestors recruited from oral legends, sacred texts, literature, and so on, was rendered into a diagram, the linearity of which provided its own evidence of logic and truth. In Europe, the arboreal genealogy developed in the thirteenth century from graphic renditions of the 'genealogia Christi' and the messianic Tree of Jesse, which became successful for the effective way in which it expressed 'the continuity of a line and the community of a lineage'.²⁶ Meanwhile, as in Islamic cultures where it had developed around the same time, the genealogical tree was also used as a diagrammatic visualization of complex universal chronicles — taking the descent of kings down to Adam — organized genealogically, often following the time-line of the royal lineage.²⁷ In my contribution,

²⁴ Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas*, pp. 67–118.

²⁵ Redondo, 'Légendes généalogiques et parentés fictives', p. 19.

²⁶ Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Genesis of the Family Tree', p. 122. The vegetation symbolism of the tree was a late medieval development.

²⁷ Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Genesis of the Family Tree', p. 116. In the Islamic world, genealogical trees similarly developed around the thirteenth century. As in Europe, they first emerged as visualizations of the important genre of historical narratives organized according to a genealogical

I analyse the political use of genealogical trees in early seventeenth-century England, through the study of an anonymous genealogical roll preserved at the College of Arms. This manuscript traces the descent of King James VI and I from Noah via the fabulous British-Welsh and Scottish kings, and illustrates how early modern European royal genealogies attempted to accommodate native, classical, and biblical aetiological narratives, to root royal legitimacy in the prestige of Greco-Roman civilization and Judeo-Christian kingship.

Mythical ancestors were also recruited to provide legal and social justification for the ownership of estates and the acquisition of a higher social status. Through genealogy, individuals could find a place within a lineage that linked them to an historical or non-historical ancestor once possessing a specific estate or high social status — sometimes even practising the same profession.²⁸ These mythical ancestors appeared in official documents, chronicle histories, heraldry, and family memoirs.

The connection between a community and a territory was often celebrated through origin myths blending ownership and estate into a self-fulfilling union. As Jean-Paul Zuniga explains in his contribution, the mythical Inca past retained a social and legal function in early colonial Mesoamerica, bridging pre-Hispanic myths and Spanish genealogical culture. At the very start of the Spanish conquest, local chiefs employed mythical dynastic histories, which bore traditional legal value, to legitimize their territorial ownership and power over a community and defend them from colonial expropriations. Over a hundred years after the Conquest, Zuniga shows, the connection to an ancient native lineage was still celebrated in visual form, through emblematic escutcheons attributed to mythical ancestors of the original Inca tribes. In her chapter, Jane Hathaway highlights a similar use of heraldry in the Ottoman world, this time to celebrate the ethnic origins of regional groups. In early modern Egypt, the heraldry of the Faquari and Qasimi factions was rooted in origin myths and visualized through colours, banners, emblems and

principle. In the fourteenth century, the Persian historian Rashīd al-Dīn devised the *Shūab-i panjgāma*, a visual reference work for a universal historical chronicle spanning Adam to the Ilkhanate Emperor Ghazan. Such genealogical trees gradually came to blend together a complex universal history embracing not only mythical ancestors of the Islamic world, but also Muhammad, the Popes, Roman Emperors, biblical prophets, and Noah, down to Adam, the first prophet. Binbas, 'Structure and Function of the Genealogical Tree', pp. 466, 486, 491. In the sixteenth century, Shafī al-Sharīf produced a similar genealogical roll — the *Subhat al-Akhhbar* — for the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, at the same time as the Sultan had commissioned the universal history called *Shahnameh of the House of Osman* and the Great Imperial Scroll. See Eryilmaz, 'From Adam to Süleyman' and Yousefzadeh, 'Shafī al-Sharīf's *Subhat al-Akhhbar* at the Medici Collection'.

²⁸ Barthélémy and Pingaud, 'Introduction', p. 8.

verbal descriptors celebrating ethnic descent from the Balkans or Anatolia, or from the Caucasus. Suspended between visualization and orality, heraldry, like myth, provided a confirmation rather than an explanation of descent.²⁹

As this volume shows, beside this public function (celebrating powerful patrons, a people, or nation, and supporting legal claims), with the role traditionally assigned to bards in oral communities having now been transferred to chronicles, genealogy in early modern cultures also began to acquire a new 'private' dimension (tracing one's own descent in what we could call an 'autobiographical' effort), as a principle employed to tell the history of an individual or a limited social entity (a family group). In her piece, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber discusses Florentine 'merchant-authors' and their use of genealogical memoirs rooted in written evidence or still-current oral traditions, grounding the prestige of their family not in mythical ancestry *tout court* but in forefathers tied to the more recent history of the city. These ancestors were celebrated through the use of an 'anthroponymic' genealogical system based on etymology and patronyms as emblems, for instance, of a profession, through which families could glorify themselves without having recourse, like the aristocracy, to vaguer, undocumented myths.

The volume ends with an overview of a crucial element which had pervaded the ideology of genealogy since the fifteenth century: the coexistence within it on the one hand of a biological dimension grounded in kin ties and the heredity of virtue, nobility and later on purity of blood,³⁰ and on the other of a metaphorical one, informed by the traditional etymological understanding of genealogy as an instrument to trace the origins of things. In the context of this complex interrelationship, Roberto Bizzocchi and Erminia Irace explore the surprising survival of mythical ancestry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and how the intersection of blood and race with philology as instruments to recover political, ethnic, and territorial origins was increasingly employed for the definition of nationalist identities through the ideology of primitivism and the sacred legitimization of early nationalisms.

The attempt to separate *historia* and *fabula* — that is, to rationalize, historicize, and eventually discard mythical elements — is one of the most evident consequences of the development of the modern historiographic method in the early modern period.³¹ Europe was not the only region where debates on the importance of philology and the historicization of texts took place. In seventeenth-century China

²⁹ Nassiet, 'La généalogie entre discours oral et écrit', p. 211.

³⁰ See Johnson and others, eds, *Blood and Kinship*.

³¹ For definitions of *historia* and *fabula*, and mythical genealogy in early modern Europe, see Bietenholtz, *Historia and Fabula*, pp. 146–57, 189–219.

a critical attitude towards ancient texts was generated by the *Kaozheng* ('search for evidence') school, and this inspired in Japan a similar movement, *Kōshōgaku*, which led to a critique of national myths and the mythical genealogies of rulers.³² In Europe, China, and Japan, the criticism of myth-making seems to have derived from the efforts of historians who were independent from the demands of rulers or powerful patrons (in China the *Kaozheng* school developed from a 'secret history' born as a critique of official imperial historiography³³), but who nevertheless shared the stage with a continuing tradition of imperial historiography still reliant on myth. In India, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, historiography, which had abandoned the religious overtones of early Islamic history writing, still consisted substantially of official chronicles and genealogies influenced by the ruling ideology.³⁴

Why is it important for our understanding of world historiography to investigate mythical ancestry as well as the reasons why it continued to retain meaning in the early modern world even as late as the nineteenth century? In his *Genealogie incredibili*, Bizzocchi provides an important methodological suggestion:

such genealogies which [...] are common also in works that are not programmatic attempts at legitimization and celebration, are nevertheless elaborations of a discourse which remains historical, albeit exotic as compared to our idea of historiography.³⁵

A study of this 'exotic' historiography, to use Bizzocchi's tongue-in-cheek adjective, should encourage us towards 'a cautious self-criticism concerning the absolute rationality of our own search for historical truth'.³⁶

As self-justifying figures, mythical ancestors should indeed be considered a form of historiography which is typical of world cultures sharing similar characteristics such as a centralized form of power as well as a burgeoning sense of national or ethnic past. Mythical ancestors are legitimate insofar as their presence in historiography is traditional, and as long as tradition itself is considered valid or

³² Burke, 'History, Myth, and Fiction', pp. 278–80. On China and Japan, see Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology* and Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths*.

³³ Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, p. 50.

³⁴ Woolf, *A Global History of History*, p. 227.

³⁵ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, p. 7: 'tali genealogie che [...] si trovano diffuse anche in opere non programmaticamente rivolte a scopi di legittimazione e celebrazione, elaborano comunque un discorso che è storico, per quanto esotico rispetto alla nostra idea di storiografia'.

³⁶ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, p. 7: 'una prudente autocritica circa l'assoluta razionalità della nostra ricerca della verità storica'.

trustworthy as an instrument of history-making. As this volume illustrates, the waning of mythical genealogy does not invariably occur due to historiographic rationalization and the subsequent rejection of mythmaking and tradition. Mythical ancestors can also lose their purpose and be discarded because a tradition has lost its meaning, or else because the culture to which it belonged no longer relies on that etiological narrative or has ceased to exist, as a consequence of internal political changes, external conquest, and so on.

Given that mythical genealogies have social, cultural and political functions, questions as to whether they were considered true or false are not always easy to answer in a straightforward way. As Kendall L. Walton observes in his influential study *Mimesis as Make-Believe*:

the presumption that they [myths] were thought of as faithful chronicles of past events at all should not be accepted lightly. Not all cultures are as constantly preoccupied with truth and falsity as ours. Hindu tellers of the *Ramayana* story and their audiences may not have been much interested in whether Rama, Sita, and Rawana *actually* existed [...] Perhaps these questions simply do not arise. Tellings of the *Ramayana* story need not be understood as claims that such events did take place. If they are not, their *main* if not exclusive role must be in make-believe.³⁷

This is not only valid for the *Ramayana*, and the mythical ancestors of Hindu castes and rulers they produced, but also for the Trojan and classical ancestors of European culture, the alleged biological ties linking the Mughal rulers to Chingis Khan, and so on. In the world of ‘make-believe’, which can be as much social as individual, social rules can be established concerning the imagining of fictional truths, the function and fiction of which depend (in Walton’s words) on the ‘collective daydream’ they reflect; when one refuses to abide by these rules, then the ‘daydream’ ceases to work.³⁸ These concepts grow out of the study of children’s games, but they have been found useful by philosophers working in aesthetics, ethics, modal logic, and the philosophy of mathematics; and in the study of mythical genealogy, too, they help us to appreciate how ‘falsehoods’ can be taken seriously. How did Scipione Ammirato, the official genealogist of the Medici family, educated in a culture of pedigrees rooted in classical antiquity, interpret the genealogy of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman from mythical ancestors (linking him to Muhammad and Adam), which he received from agents of the Medici Oriental

³⁷ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 96.

³⁸ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 39.

Press?³⁹ He knew the traditional (and cross-cultural) ‘language’ of mythical genealogy: that many of those ancestors were mythical, that they played an important function in the sultan’s genealogy, and that they served to celebrate the legitimacy of his rule as grounded in remote antiquity and sacred history.

The idea of a world of ‘make-believe’ following specific rules can be helpful to recover the deep-seated meaning of mythical ancestors without dismissing them, as some historians have done, for not conveying historical ‘truths’. In fact, mythical ancestors can continue to work and remain ‘true’ in the appropriate tradition for which they were created — usually, to justify the legitimacy of a dynasty, a people, an individual, or a nation. But Walton digs even more into the notion of history as an act of communication when he adds that ‘fictionality is not truth’, not even within a fictional world, because fiction only asserts that ‘a proposition is believed, or that someone desires or claims or denies it to be true’.⁴⁰ Such reflections can help us consider the implications of changes in the authors and audience of mythical genealogy as a form of history, at a time in which several readers of such genealogies were becoming increasingly influenced by notions of evidence-based historiography.

This essay collection provides comparative examples of such perceptions in early modern world cultures, from situations in which mythical ancestors were created or altered to fulfil a specific scope, to cases in which the same ancestors were slowly dismissed as they were no longer considered meaningful, or they gradually lost importance with the advent of a new political or cultural moment. Therefore, this volume suggests, to think of mythical ancestors within the opposition of historical and non-historical is not a suitable parameter for the understanding of this complex global phenomenon. As long as they are perceived as having a meaning in the political, cultural, and social dimension for which they were devised, they will continue to play their part.

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⁴⁰ Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 42.

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THE MYTHICAL ANCESTRY OF THE MUGHAL DYNASTY

Lisa Balabanlilar

A universal effort in the pre-modern world was the manipulation of ancestral legacies in support of political or social legitimacy, as this collection of scholarship will attest. Lineage was a tool used ‘to exalt a line and legitimize its power [...] Medieval genealogy display[ed] a family’s intention to affirm and extend its place in political life’.¹ The true power of an imperial lineage lay in its narrative logic, as carefully blended genealogies and court chronicles cohered into teleological mythologies of inevitability and power.

In the case of the Mughal rulers of pre-modern India, the descendants of Central Asian empire builders Chingis Khan (1162–1227) and Timur (Tamerlane, 1336–1405), their particularly charismatic lineage was a source of political legitimacy so illustrious that at times affirmations of Mughal power and identity seemed reduced to that single element.² Their ancestral narrative linked them to cultural heroes and sacred landscapes, while the more immediate dynastic past supplied the royal court with an imperial culture and ruling ideology that sustained them long after their exile from Central Asia in the sixteenth century. The origins of this genealogical epic lay in the twelfth century, distinguishing an elite ruling lineage among the semi-nomadic Mongol tribes by evoking charismatic and magical

¹ Spiegel, ‘Genealogy’, p. 47.

² Established in India in 1526, when Babur brought his armies south from their base in Kabul and defeated the Lodi sultans at Panipat, the Mughal dynasty would not be entirely displaced until 1858.

Lisa Balabanlilar, Associate Professor of History, Rice University

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antecedents, and offering divine sanction. In the thirteenth century, as Mongol power grew and they turned their forces westward, the extraordinary utility of their genealogical claims continued to elevate and legitimize them — even as they subdued subject peoples with long imperial traditions of their own, and for whom nomadic armies might otherwise carry little ruling credibility beyond their ability to wage war and apply brute force. So forceful was the political and social dynamism of this imperial ancestral narrative that it would remain at the core of successive claims to legitimate kingship among generations of empire builders, as they migrated from the northern borders of China to Iran and Afghanistan and finally to India.

This is a study of the mobility and utility of the medieval genealogical mythology of the Mongol tribes, as it successfully supported the charisma and legitimacy of ambitious warlords, over the course of hundreds of years and across thousands of miles. The Mongol princes and their successors, in particular the Timurids of Transoxiana (Mawarannahr), identified powerfully with this dynastic narrative, using it to reinforce political success, de-legitimize princely rivals, label ‘usurpers’, and marginalize entire branches of the family tree, all in response to the shifting requirements of legitimate rule in medieval Central Asia. As the generations passed, the occasional effort to modify or re-direct their inherited charismatic genealogy proved irrelevant, unpopular, and ultimately unnecessary. Even as the descendants of these Mongol and Turkish empire builders were driven out of Central Asia, migrating into India in the sixteenth century, the almost unchanged ancestral narrative continued to be successfully wielded as a critical source for their continued claims to sovereignty. Having fled south, the last of the Timurid princes, his dynasty coming to be known as the Mughals, would successfully transfer the charisma of his lineage to the Indian subcontinent, affirming the sustained power of the genealogical narrative. For those imperial exiles, the last in a long series of successful empire builders — from Chingis Khan to Timur, from Babur to Akbar and well beyond — their venerable lineage continued to define dynastic rights and access to power.

In its final iteration, this genealogical narrative not only justified the imperial claims and aspirations of the Mughals, it also gave their community an identity that sustained them in their South Asian exile. Their lineage was much more than a passive inheritance — the personalities of their ancestors defined Mughal court culture, their social and cultural values, their aspirations and collective identity. Valorization of their past led the Mughals to establish a veritable genealogical cult, encouraging them to compose and collect chronicles and even personal memoirs. These ancestral texts, pored over by every generation at the royal court, gave the Mughals a relationship with their antecedents that remained both immediate and reciprocal. The collection of chronicles they created offered the dynasty a credible balance between the exemplary and the idiosyncratic, codifying an imperial

memory that would frame the Mughal vision of kingship, legitimacy, and heroism. Widely disseminated, often read and referenced, these texts came to encompass and represent the community's collective memory. So effectively did they confirm the charisma and the culture of their heritage, that the writings themselves would take on the character of the dynasty's ancestors and cultural heroes.

The Genealogical Assertions of Chingis Khan (1162–1227)

The historical origins of the Mughals can be traced to the Turco-Mongol tribes who ruled in west Central Asia in the wake of the Mongol devastation of the thirteenth century. The tribal leaders saw themselves as the descendants of Chingis Khan's son Chaghatay or of his grandson, the Toluid Ilkhan Hulegu, firmly locating their legitimacy in the charisma of the Chingisid lineage.³ The narrative of Chingisid ancestral beginnings follows all of the tropes of origin myths: animal forebears, magical events, wives and mothers of beauty and wisdom, and heroic warriors who survive great personal trials and losses.⁴ The first ancestors of Chingis Khan were identified as the blue-grey wolf and his wife, the fallow doe, who settled at the source of the Onun River at the foot of the sacred mountain, Burkan Qaldun. Their descendants were humans who, after twelve generations, produced a man with a single eye with which he could see vast distances. It was he who sighted a distant cart bearing a beautiful young woman, Alan Qo'a, who, he determined, would marry his younger brother, Dobun Mergen. The figure of Alan Qo'a would remain at the centre of Turco-Mongol genealogical claims, providing her descendants with the ultimate legitimizing charisma and adding lustre to the lines of myriads of Central Asian kings and khans.

Dobun Mergen died young, leaving Alan Qo'a alone with two sons and a young male servant. After the death of her husband, the widowed Alan Qo'a bore three more sons.⁵ Aware of disapproval and gossip, including that of her two eldest sons,

³ *The Secret History*, ed. and trans. by de Rachewiltz. Chingis Khan's sons were Jochi, whose line controlled the Russian steppes; Chaghatay, in West Asia; Ogodei, the Great Khan; and Tolui, in the Mongol heartland. It was Tolui's line which produced Kublai, ruler of the Yuan dynasty of China and later Great Khan, and his brother and close ally, Hulegu, who tidied up the Mongol conquests in West Asia and established what was known as the Ilkhanate (Secondary Khanate).

⁴ *The Secret History*, ed. and trans. by de Rachewiltz.

⁵ These origin myths are presented in the very earliest dynastic narrative of the Mongols — the *Secret History* and the *Altan Debter* (Golden Book) — which agree on the main points. It is worth noting that Alan Qo'a's three younger sons, the youngest of whom was the ancestor

Alan Qo'a defended the legitimacy of the younger three by explaining that she had been visited three times by 'a resplendent golden man [who] entered by the smoke hole or the door top of the tent'. In Alan Qo'a's words: '[he] rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed he crept out on a moonbeam or a ray of sun in the guise of a yellow dog'.⁶ The story was generally accepted, although some versions defied scepticism by confirming that members of the tribe had actually witnessed a golden light descend into the smoke hole of Alan Qo'a's tent. When, upon her death, the family property was shared, the youngest son, Bodoncar, who was considered a fool, received nothing. His taming of a hunting hawk and successful survival in the wilderness brought him to the attention of a local tribe and, having proven his worth, he was reunited with his brothers. Alan Qo'a's three younger sons would be the progenitors of the Mongol tribes.

Chingis Khan's early biographers, possibly beginning within only a few years after his death, explained and justified his conquest, boldly writing him into the premier charismatic Mongol heritage through claims that Yisugei Ba'atur, Chingis Khan's father, was a distant descendant of Bodoncar. The Sung envoy Chao Hung, author of the earliest account of the Mongols, scornfully suspected it was simply an effort to devise a lineage that would 'bolster their imperial pretension'.⁷ Modern scholars have also expressed doubt as to the veracity of the Chingisid genealogical construct; for instance, according to the great Central Asianist Denis Sinor, those who wrote *The Secret History of the Mongols* had actually 'found it necessary to trace his [Chingis's] genealogy through twenty-three imaginary generations (he being the twenty-third)'.⁸ That the immediate descendants of Chingis Khan would take

of Chingis and Timur, were removed from the established patrimonial descent line of Dobun Mergen, and the original royal bloodlines of the wolf and doe. Alan Qo'a was the single human source of their lineage.

⁶ *The Secret History*, ed. and trans. by de Rachewiltz, p. 5. In Mongol lore, only the children born of the yellow light were considered to be true Mongols. As Skrynnikova points out, both the *Secret History* and the other major source of early Mongol history, the *Compendium of Chronicles*, agree on the basic narrative — that the yellow dog had fathered the children — which leads her to suggest that in this way the genealogy returned to a patrilineal descent. See Skrynnikova, 'Rivalry Between Mongols and Tayici'ut for Authority', pp. 134–35.

⁷ Jackson, 'The Mongol Age in Eastern Inner Asia', p. 28.

⁸ Sinor, 'The Acquisition', p. 42; *The Secret History*, ed. and trans. by de Rachewiltz, pp. 2–5. Two of the three origin myths of the Turks recorded by the Chinese have the first ruler descending from a she-wolf. See Sinor, 'The Acquisition'. Regarding the dating of *The Secret History*, and therefore, the rationale of its appearance, many scholars place its origins in 1228, including de Rachewiltz (*The Secret History*, ed. and trans. by Rachewiltz, p. xxxiii). Yet, Atwood positions it in

such care to forge a detailed, culturally meaningful narrative of his descent from the most elite lineage of the Mongols should not be surprising. The fact that their genealogical claims came as they did, in the midst of their greatest military success which extended their rule over the largest contiguous land-based empire in history, reinforces the great value contained in those evocative ancestral associations. So successfully was Chingis Khan's ruling charisma constructed by his immediate successors that even in the aftermath of the Mongol imperial collapse, at the death of the last Ilkhanid king in 1335, kingship remained tied to the Chingisid dynastic line as the most potent force in Central Asian politics. Rulership in the region was and would continue to be regularly and violently contested, but the only candidates for power were recognized princes of the Chingisid lineage.

Timur (1336–1405)

Timur, a Turk of the Barlas clan and part of the Chaghatay *ulus* (an administrative district, here describing the appanages of the descendants of Chingis Khan), seized power in the shifting political landscape of post-Ilkhanid Mongol Central Asia. He was likely a lesser member of the Central Asian aristocracy, and proved to be a military genius, but he lacked the necessary credentials for legitimate rule: that is, direct genealogical descent from Chingis Khan. Aware of his shortcomings, Timur went to extraordinary measures to evoke Chingisid symbols and images. Demonstrating great concern for 'the restrictions which Chingisid concepts of legality placed on genealogical and sovereign claims',⁹ Timur portrayed himself as the restorer of the Chingisid world order. Famously, Timur governed through a puppet khan, the Chaghatay prince Suyurghatmish. He also married himself and his sons into the Chingisid royal lineage, creating for himself the title '*Guregen*' — 'son-in-law' — to celebrate the second-hand genealogical link. Probably born in the 1320s, even his claims to a 1336 birthdate may have been yet another effort to tie himself to a legitimizing Mongol ancestry, suggesting a direct transfer of charisma from Abu

1252 for reasons that include the unitary quality of the historical genealogical narrative, shaped 'so that beginning, middle, end all strike the same note' (Atwood, 'The Date', p. 5). Regarding the rise of the Chingisid empire, a steppe imperial tradition did already exist, in the wake of the Gok Turk and Uighur empires, in which 'a powerful clan would rise, called the *altan urugh* (Golden Clan), led by a supreme, heavenly mandated ruler, the *Qaghan*'. The *qaghan* was a sacred ruler, legitimized by successful conquest, 'giving tangible evidence of his possession of charisma, heaven-sent good fortune'. See Di Cosmo and Golden, 'Introduction', pp. 1–2.

⁹ Manz, 'Timur and the Problem of a Conqueror's Legacy', p. 36.

Said Bahadur, the last Ilkhanid ruler descended from the Chingisid Hulegu Khan, who had died in that same year.¹⁰

Court historians of Timur's time emphasized his ties to a Chingisid source of legitimate power, however second-hand or tenuous. For instance, the author of the *Zafarnamah* wrote that Timur's ancestor Qarachar Barlas had closely advised Chingis Khan and had been chief advisor to Chingis's son Chaghatay, protector of the Mongol tradition and the Chingisid Yasa. Timur then could argue for a dynastic precedent in his role as 'advisor' to the puppet khans, whom he had placed in power.¹¹ One generation later, his biographies would claim a direct genealogical link tying Turks and Mongols, through the twin great-grandsons of Alan Qo'a — Qabul Khan, ancestor of the Chingisids, and Qaculi Bahadur, ancestor of the Timurids.¹² Qaculi's dream of stars rising from the bodies of himself and his brother was interpreted as prophetic, foretelling powerful descendants: three from Qabul (culminating in the birth of Chingis Khan), followed by eight from Qaculi (the final and brightest star signifying the birth of Timur). The order of the prophecy put Qabul on the throne and Qaculi as the power behind the throne, as 'commander in chief, tactician, general, and wielder of the sword',¹³ in what John E. Woods calls a 'covenant of dual kingship'.¹⁴ In the Timurid world, this made for a powerful assertion of 'the historical primacy of the Barlas over their various non-Chingisid rivals in the Chaghatayid khanate'.¹⁵

In the fourteenth century, however, ruling legitimacy had come to require more than evocations of Chingisid power and ancestry. Timur was a Muslim, as was much of the population he ruled. As ruler, he declared himself not just the defender of the Chingisid tradition, but also the champion of Islam. By funding the establishment of sufi *dargahs* (tomb/shrine), associating closely with *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), and respecting *ulema* (scholars/learned men), he established a new and very powerful model of legitimation in post-Mongol Central Asia. Timur's success in tying his power to both Chingisid and Islamic sources of legitimacy established the charismatic authority of his lineage, and his descendants

¹⁰ Manz, 'Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty', p. 113.

¹¹ Manz, 'Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty', p. 110. A minor element in Timur's genealogical justifications was Tumene Khan, an ancestor shared with Chingis Khan, yet rarely mentioned in Timur's period.

¹² Dobrovitz, 'The Turco-Mongolian Tradition of Common Origin', p. 273.

¹³ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, p. 231.

¹⁴ Woods, 'Timur's Genealogy', p. 91.

¹⁵ Woods, 'Timur's Genealogy', p. 102.

creatively built on this established power. As Beatrice Manz has written, '[a]fter his death the competing princes, choosing their legitimation from the traditions available to them, considered a large number of options'.¹⁶ Timur's immediate successor, his son Shahrukh, lavishly supported the production of historical chronicles which highlighted the ancestral link of the Barlas advisor to Chingis Khan and Chaghatai,¹⁷ while emphasizing loyalty to Islam, by using the title *padshah*,¹⁸ rather than *Guregen*, as well as by referencing the caliphate in his coins and presenting himself as 'the restorer of Islamic order'.¹⁹ Official histories of the period, such as Yazdi's *Zafarnama* (*Story of Victory*, c. 1425), played down Timur's links to the Chingisid past and emphasized his Islamic loyalties. They described Timur as the rightful successor to earlier 'legitimate' rulers in Islamic Iran — a strategy which could be read as advancing the claims of Shahrukh and his line, already known for conservative religious leanings.²⁰ Among the many histories designed to legitimize Shahrukh and his sons, the most important was the *Majma' al-tawarikh* (*Universal History*) by Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430), a world history which ranged from Adam to Shahrukh, and which reinforced both 'Timurid claims to succeed earlier Mongol rulers as well as Islamic caliphs and kings'.²¹ A later Ilkhanid historian would repeat the claims, adding that both the Prophet Abraham and the Mongol tradition demanded meticulous attention to genealogy, and that everyone should have 'a clear and unambiguous family tree'.²²

Perhaps the most stunning example of the manipulation of Timur's legacy in support of the requirements of his descendants can be found in the period just after

¹⁶ Manz, 'Timur and the Problem of a Conqueror's Legacy', p. 34.

¹⁷ Manz, 'Timur and the Problem of a Conqueror's Legacy', p. 37.

¹⁸ A Persian title, meaning 'great king'.

¹⁹ Manz, 'Mongol History Rewritten and Re-Lived', p. 144.

²⁰ Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, p. 99.

²¹ Woods, 'The Rise of Timurid Historiography', pp. 96–99. See also Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, p. 98.

²² Fazlullah, 'Jamiu't-Tawarikh', trans. and annotated by Thackston, III, pp. 10, 82: 'Abraham the friend of God charged his children to keep an orderly record of the genealogical tree of their sons and grandsons, generation after generation [...] so that every one of his descendants would know his fathers and forefathers in detail'; 'The many clans and tribes descended from Alan Qo'a are so numerous that if the individuals were to be counted they would exceed a million, yet each of them has a clear and unambiguous family tree, for it is a Mongolian custom to preserve one's relationship to one's fathers and forefathers, and every child is taught and inculcated with his genealogy like all others in that nation. There is not one among them who does not know his tribe and lineage'.

his death, when a Timurid genealogy was created and disseminated, which miraculously united Turco-Mongol imperial charisma with the most esteemed spiritual lineage in Islam. Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, had a tombstone erected for Timur which, as had become standard at the time, claimed that Timur descended from Alan Qo'a, of the miraculous births. But whereas previously the paternity of her three youngest sons had been assigned by later interpreters variously to a beam of light, a yellow dog, or a golden man who entered through the smoke hole of her *yurt*, that the majority of the population of fifteenth-century Khurasan and Mawarannahr was Muslim inspired genealogical modifications. The beam of light was now identified as a descendant of the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali ibn Abu Taleb, who, under the title of 'Sword of Islam', had by this time become the centre of a rich tradition of myths of heroic and sacred character.

For generations, Timur's descendants continued to mould him into the ancestor of their needs, and with each iteration they were better able to directly claim their ruling legitimacy from Timur's own lineage, rather than continue to forge questionable links to a Chingisid ancestry. Timur's 'deliberately unpretentious' appellation of *Guregen*, became over the years 'a powerful and positive evocation of the hero-ancestor, Amir Timur, and no longer a mark of humility and apology for non-Chingizid rule'.²³

Sahib Qiran

In the century after the death of Timur, creative use of other regnal titles evoked, among the Timurid princes, direct genealogical links to both political and spiritual ancestries. Timur's success and charisma had so profoundly legitimized his rule (and that of his descendants) that biographers began replacing references to a Chingisid ancestry with the universalist heroic name of *Sahib Qiran* (Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction), 'a royal title that was fused with charismatic significance and universalist implications'.²⁴ The reference would merge Timur's (and his descendants') ancestry with an esteemed line of West Asian conquerors and cultural heroes. These claims created direct ties to the pre-Islamic kings of Iran, coupled with regular comparisons and invocations of Anushiran the Just and Khusrau. Contemporary manuscripts can be compared with an earlier biography by Shami, which described Timur as *Amir-i Buzurg Teymur-i Guregeni* (Timur, the Great Commander and

²³ Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, pp. 18–36.

²⁴ Chann, 'Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction', p. 94.

Son-in-Law), highlighting his subservience to the house of Chingiz Khan. Instead, Yazdi replaced this address with the majestic *Hazrat-i Sahib-i Qiran* (the Noble Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction). Yazdi went on to methodically eliminate the Chingisid influence altogether in his text.²⁵ According to Naindeep Singh Chann, '[t]hese changes reflect the magnified place of Timur as a source of legitimacy, helping to codify a particular image of Timur as a politically and spiritually charismatic individual, linked forevermore to the title Sahib-qiran'.²⁶

Timur's panegyrists wrote that '[a] hundred centuries of time go by before fortune hands the reins of rule to a lord of the conjunction like you', and that

the learned and historians are agreed that in the time of Islam, nay from Adam's era until this very moment, no lord of the conjunction of Solomonic power like Amir Timur Kuragan [Guregen] has set foot from the abyss of nonexistence into the world of being.²⁷

Sahib Qiran was used in support or even as a replacement of other titles, and came to be so powerfully identified with Timur that even sixteenth-century Ottoman courtiers could argue the superior political implications of Timur's title versus the pretensions of genealogical legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans. Timur's descendants referred to him almost exclusively as *Sahib Qiran*. Individual princes would occasionally seize the title for themselves, evoking his memory and reinforcing the central importance of their lineage.

The fifteenth-century historian Dawlatshah explained that 'genealogists of the Turks say that Amir Timur Guregen's line and that of Genghis Khan met in Alanqua Khatun [...] and from her sprang this noble family'.²⁸ By the time of the late Timurids, however, the person of Timur had been so exalted, in part by the various histories of his reign solicited by his heirs, that the Timurid-Mughal historian Khwandamir could pretend to ignore the added value of a noble lineage, writing that 'the Sahib Qiran's person is so noble, his magnificence so great and his ambition so exalted that there is no necessity to recount his noble forefathers' excellences or to publish his mighty ancestors' virtues'.²⁹ Khwandamir followed this statement, however, by detailing Timur's lineage, tying him to the mythical

²⁵ Chann, 'Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction', p. 104.

²⁶ Chann, 'Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction', p. 99.

²⁷ Samarqandi, 'Tadhkirat', ed. and trans. by Thackston, p. 15.

²⁸ Samarqandi, 'Tadhkirat', ed. and trans. by Thackston, p. 15.

²⁹ Khwandamir, 'Habib al-Siyar', ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 6–7.

mother of the Mongol tribes. Emphasizing her chastity, Khwandamir prevented the anticipated scepticism by referencing the most famous virgin birth, commenting: 'If you hear the tale of Mary, you will incline to Alan Qo'a'.³⁰

Babur (1483–1530) and the Timurid Cult

Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur was born a prince, son of a Timurid father and Chingisid mother, and was thus able to claim direct family connections to all of the rulers of Central Asia. Babur's lifelong struggle to reunify the core lands of the Timurids in Mawarannahr was dramatic and destined to failure. Yet, his memoir makes it very clear that his lineage and ancestral models provided both a justification and support for his efforts, as they defined his worldview and understanding of dynastic identity and ruling legitimacy.

Although he was of Chingisid descent through his mother's lineage, Babur identified powerfully with his paternal Timurid inheritance. His conquest strategy was driven by the emulation of Timur: his three efforts to take and rule Samarkand had much to do with the city having been Timur's capital. Even as he had lost his ancestral lands of Transoxiana/Mawarannahr, having been driven out by the Mongol Uzbeks in the early years of the sixteenth century, Babur justified his raids across the Indus river by claiming that Timur's conquest of north India in 1398 defined Hindustan as an integral part of his Timurid legacy. Although his own invasion was without doubt 'an act of military imperialism legitimized by Timur's brief invasion', Babur was self-consciously and deliberately performing an ancestral re-enactment.³¹

Babur's hold on power was thus by no means assured. As a partial remedy, Babur and his followers invested in a campaign of valorization and remembrance of their supremely charismatic forefathers, Chingis Khan and more often, Timur, to enhance their own status. After a successful conquest of the Lodi sultanate, Babur's efforts to bring his family and followers to India were fuelled by ancestral connections. As we learn from Gulbadan Begim's *Humayunnama* (*Story of Humayun*), Babur sent letters to all who had ties to the Timurid-Mughal elite, calling them to gather at his royal court in Agra, particularly those who belonged to the lineage of Timur or Chingis Khan ('az nasl Sahib Qiran ya Chingis Khan').³²

³⁰ Khwandamir, 'Habib al-Siyar', ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 6–7.

³¹ Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, p. 292.

³² Begim, *Humayunnama*, fol. 11^a; Begim, *Humayunnama*, ed. and trans. by Beveridge, p. 13.

Some scholars have argued that Timur's violent legacy in India must have reduced the power of his lineage, and that his sacking of Delhi in 1398 left bitter memories that forced his descendants to invent new genealogical strategies.³³ There is no indication that their ancestry was ever in fact viewed as an impediment to the Mughals. There is no sign of retreat; no time at which they drew back from or disowned their Turco-Mongol ancestral heroes. Through constant nostalgic references and reenactments, Babur affirmed his loyalty to his original and most potent political/warrior model, that of his ancestor Timur.³⁴

Clinging as he did to the Timurid model, Babur seems never to have reconciled himself to the loss of the dynastic homeland in Mawarannah. While Timur's conquest in South Asia had offered Babur a degree of authenticity as the legitimate ruler of Hindustan, his relationship with the ancestral past would remain, ultimately, coloured by nostalgia and a powerful sense of loss. Finding power and identity in remembrance, his descendants would continue to cling to the Timurid legacy. Building a court culture around loss and exile, regularly referencing their charismatic lineage, Babur's descendants asserted political legitimacy and constructed a sense of self. Called Mughal (*Mongol*) by others, they referred to themselves as *Timuriyyan-i Hind* (the Timurids of India) or *Guregeniyyah* (the People of the Son-in-Law).

Much of the artistic and literary production of the Mughal royal court would be directed towards affirmations of dynastic charisma. Following the example of their ancestor Timur and his successors, the Mughals manipulated history writing to emphasize the Timurid inheritance. Illustrated genealogical scrolls

³³ Lefèvre writes that '[f]rom the moment the Mughals set foot in the subcontinent, they became aware of the limited legitimacy they would be able to derive from such genealogical credentials in the Indian context [...] for neither Chingiz Khān and his successors nor Timūr had left very good memories in India [...] In order to make up for such a disadvantage, the Mughals resorted to two solutions throughout their reign. The first one consisted in refraining from using their Chingīzid-Timūrīd lineage in order to justify their rule in India' (Lefèvre, 'In the Name of the Fathers', p. 415). However, Lefèvre goes on to describe Timurid references in the genealogical seal, and almost a dozen chronicles, as well as in innumerable miniature paintings, eventually adding that '[t]hroughout Mughal domination over India, Timūrīd descent remained the one and only genealogy relentlessly claimed in official chronicles, paintings, buildings, coins and seals' (pp. 416, 430). See also Anooshahr, who makes a similar argument in *The Ghazi Sultans*.

³⁴ To reject the Timurid inheritance, even for a brief period in the midst of the conquest of northern India, would have been not only counterintuitive, but also confusing to his armies and followers. Additionally, while Timur's sack of northern India is known for its violence, much of the region retained ties to a Timurid mandate and political structures, notably in Bherah, Kushab, Chenab, and Chiniot. See Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. and trans. by Mano, p. 352.

(*silsilah nama*) charted the dynasty's direct descent from Timur, while a genre of allegorical court painting illustrated the family relationship, posing current rulers with the figure of their ancestor Timur, at times proffering a crown in benevolent approval. Their genealogy was emphasized in diagrams on the Mughal imperial seal and on small medallions that the king's favourites pinned to their turbans. The Mughals regularly called for an eventual return to the Timurid homeland, which remained in the possession of the Uzbeks and inaccessible, but never forgotten.

Akbar (1542–1605), the Millennial Sovereign

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the narrative of the Timurid past had been essentially settled. The genealogy had been carefully reiterated and reinforced over the decades by successive claimants to power, and the dynastic heirs, the Mughals of Hindustan, were well aware of the long and charismatic lineage they had inherited. Among other important dynastic histories, the Timurid history of Rashiduddin Fazlullah, the *Jamiu't-Tawarikh* (*Compendium of Chronicles*), and the *Habibu's-siyar* (*Beloved of Careers*) by the late-Timurid historian Khwandamir were well-read and influential volumes in the Mughal library.³⁵ Yet, well-established as the ancestral narrative had become, its value as political and social capital continued to allow for creative invention.

In the late sixteenth century, the Emperor Akbar's close friend and amanuensis, Abu'l Fazl, took a turn at the dynastic narrative, writing a detailed genealogical manifesto which invested the person of the emperor with sacred charisma and revised the historical memory to the glory of the emperor's reign.³⁶ While developing new mythologies of the ancestral past in the service of the Mughal present, Abu'l Fazl 'sketched continual connections between the emperor and his ancestors,

³⁵ Khwandamir wrote at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara of Herat, and his work eventually appeared in Khwandamir, *Habibu's-siyar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston. A sixteenth-century copy of the *Habibu's-siyar* with marginal notes by the emperor Shah Jahan was sold by Sotheby's in 2014, listed as: 'Khwand Amir (d. 1534), *Habibu's-siyar*, vol. 3.2, India or Central Asia, dated 978 AH/ AD 1570. Persian manuscript on paper, 487 leaves, 21 lines to the page, written in black *nasta'liq* script, annotations throughout in red ink in Shah Jahan's hand, tan morocco binding with central medallions, with flap 24.5 by 18.6 cm'.

³⁶ Claims of sacred kingship were reinforced by the timing of Akbar's reign, at the turn of the Islamic millenium (AD 1591–1592), a period tied to expectations of an emergent messiah. See Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*.

as well as between the emperor and Quranic-mythical exemplars'.³⁷ As others had done before him, Abu'l Fazl embellished descriptions of Akbar's ancestors, offering them as models and representatives of dynastic strength, legitimacy, spiritual, or aesthetic power — the very attributes he celebrated in the emperor himself. Beginning with Adam,³⁸ Akbar's ancestors 'were monarchs, emperors, and makers of kings' ('hemi shah o shahinshah o padshah-i baksh').³⁹ Yet according to Abu'l Fazl, none were so great as to surpass Akbar's own extraordinary virtues, in whose 'exalted gaze' were 'indications of foresightedness' ('atwar dur andeshi az nighah baland laih').⁴⁰ In Abu'l Fazl's hands, Mughal genealogy took on 'a highly iconic character', the result of which is 'a narrative gallery of kings in continuous succession' or an 'unbroken, wholly legitimate succession of rulers over the centuries, that threatens to overwhelm the separate identities of individual kings with a mythic homogeneity imposed by the ideal pressure of such dynastic fiction'.⁴¹

The Mughal genealogical exposition included, of course, the figure of Alan Qo'a, the linchpin of Turco-Mongol charisma and, in Abu'l Fazl's telling, the Abrahamic perfect woman.⁴² Abu'l Fazl was quick to defend the Mongol tradition of the fatherless births, reminding the reader that Adam was born of neither father nor mother and that such a thing had happened in the story of Jesus.⁴³ In Abu'l Fazl's words: '[i]f you listen to stories of Mary, then accept the same of Alan Qo'a' ('Hikayet-i Maryam eger bi-shinavi, ba Alan Qoa hamchunan bi-girawi').⁴⁴ It is telling that Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu Begim, was given the honorific appellation

³⁷ Lal, 'Settled, Sacred and All-Powerful', pp. 942–43.

³⁸ Abu'l Fazl repeats the claim that Adam was buried in Sri Lanka (which he described as a part of India), reinforcing his efforts to tie all of the saints and heroes of the past as tightly to Akbar as could be stomachable by his readers. Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, I, pp. 178–79.

³⁹ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, I, p. 164 (my translation, unless specified).

⁴⁰ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, I, p. 158.

⁴¹ Speigel, 'Genealogy', p. 50.

⁴² Lal questions Abu'l Fazl's focus on Alan Qo'a, who is described as 'a little known Mongol princess'. According to Lal, Jesuit influences must have inspired ideas of a virgin birth; that of Alan Qo'a was thus a 'new genealogy' invented by Abu'l Fazl as 'an ideology for imperial governance'. As we have seen, however, Abu'l Fazl in fact remained loyal to long-established genealogical traditions, his innovation being centred solely around Akbar's place as the apex of the dynasty (Lal, 'Settled, Sacred and All-Powerful', p. 942).

⁴³ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 218–19.

⁴⁴ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 218–19 (my translation).

of 'Mariam al-Zamani' — 'the Mary of Her Time' — her title not only referencing the Madonna, but deliberately framing Akbar as another Jesus.

Abu'l Fazl carefully reiterated the narrative of Timur's successors: Alan Qo'a's third son by the yellow light was the Mughal ancestor shared with the Chingisids (in the ninth degree), with Timur (in the fourteenth degree), and Akbar (in the twenty-second degree). It is notable that by this time, as with later Timurid works of history, the pairing of Mongol and Islamic ancestries had become so seamless and unapologetic that the effort of Ulugh Beg, Timur's grandson, to infuse the paternity of Alan Qo'a's sons with the charisma of Ali ibn Abu Taleb, cousin and son-in-law of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, was simply ignored. The Mongol myth was left to stand on its own, without awkward Islamicate supports and buttresses.

Abu'l Fazl offered Bodoncar Qa'an, Qo'a's youngest son, the princely attributes befitting a worthy ancestor.⁴⁵ Six generations later the dream of his descendant, of shining stars springing from the bodies of his brother then himself, was a confirmation of the ongoing glory of his lineage, forecasting long lines of princes and the appearance of powerful world conquerors. As Qabul's descendants, who would be the Chingisids, were first to emerge in the dream, his line would be the first line of kings. Abu'l Fazl did not leave Qaculi's qualities to the reader to surmise: he was superior in maturity, competence and greatness to his older brother. Did this inheritance reflect a need to give power to the eldest son? Abu'l Fazl conceded that some might consider that a factor but insisted that although it may seem that primogeniture guided the decision, the order of birth was not a factor.⁴⁶ Instead, Abu'l Fazl explained the delay as a cosmic necessity, allowing the experience of each generation of Qaculi's descendants to multiply and build, increasing the magnificence of the lineage. And therein lies the great genealogical innovation of Abu'l Fazl, who reveals his hand in a brief summation of the lineage, the real value of which lay in Akbar's eventual appearance, as the ultimate goal of this line.⁴⁷ Many ancestors were great kings, many great spiritual leaders, he comments, but divine kingship came with the birth of Akbar.⁴⁸

Abu'l Fazl used the story of Qaculi Bahadur's miraculous dream to reinforce a genealogical reversal. Although dynastic historians had understood the first seven stars springing from Qaculi's loins as his direct descendants, with Timur, the eighth, completing the series, Abu'l-Fazl chose instead to reject the ancestors in the line-

⁴⁵ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 222–23.

⁴⁶ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, pp. 230–31.

⁴⁷ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, p. 231.

⁴⁸ Allami, *The History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Thackston, p. 231.

age who did not rule, reckoning that the very first of the stars denoting kingship represented Timur, with his celestial descendants reaching the true culmination of the prophecy in the person of Akbar. While Abu'l Fazl's Mughal genealogy clearly demonstrates the continued emphasis of the Mughals on the Timurid half of the founders' lineage, Timur is framed as little more than a gifted stepping stone to the present. Abu'l Fazl's praise for Timur remained in fact reserved, but his interest, after all, was entirely in the celebration of his patron and friend, Akbar. With the political legitimacy of the dynasty firmly established in its descent from the greatest kings of the Islamic and Turco-Mongol worlds, the most critical aspect of Abu'l Fazl's imperial genealogy had become the placement of Akbar at the pinnacle of a long line of conquerors and kings.

In Abu'l Fazl's telling, the power of the exemplary is lost in the headlong rush of idealized genealogical inevitability. The flow of generations of heroes and kings, the wise and the benevolent, drives the narration inexorably towards the culminating appearance of the *insan-i kamil*, the perfect man, Akbar. From Chingis to Timur to Babur, legitimacy had descended from illustrious and venerated ancestors, but for Abu'l Fazl, the kings of the Islamic and Turco-Mongol worlds drew their greatest charisma from their descendant, Akbar, who stood as the apex of their glorious lineage. In the process of establishing Akbar's sacrality, Abu'l Fazl invented the living emperor as a mythologized king — the ultimate 'ancestor' (teleologically and in later generations) — so successfully that his artefacts were viewed as holy relics, and it was claimed that they carried magical properties.⁴⁹

Conclusion: Mughal Dynastic Memoirs

The shared ancestry of the Chingisids, Timurids, and Mughals offered warrior heroes and conquerors whom each generation could use to justify their continued imperial aspirations. Yet, at the heart of the narrative, was the figure of a woman, Alan Qo'a, whose children born of light initiated the sacred lineage. In claiming ties to Alan Qo'a, through 'twenty-three imaginary generations', Chingis Khan, the most successful empire builder of the pre-modern world, carefully located himself within what was understood to be the ultimate charismatic pedigree.⁵⁰ Even after their conversion to Islam, descendants of the Turco-Mongol rulers of West Asia

⁴⁹ It has been reported that, even in the modern period, some believed that putting an Akbar-era coin in water would render the water helpful to a woman in childbirth.

⁵⁰ Sinor, 'The Acquisition', p. 22.

retained their allegiance to earlier genealogical models, imaginatively weaving Chingisid and Islamic legitimizing traditions into a single narrative that found acceptance within the constraints of local traditions. An attempt by Ulugh Beg to enhance the traditional Mongol genealogy by identifying the miraculous light as a descendant of Ali ibn Abu Taleb, representing the most sacred lineage in Islam, proved to be completely unnecessary. Later chroniclers simply returned to the earlier narrative, unapologetically accepting the authenticity of their ancestral mythology, although quick to point out the obvious similarities of Alan Qo'a and the Virgin Mary. With an ancestral narrative so well established as to be unassailable by the reign of Akbar, the emperor's amanuensis and chronicler, Abu'l Fazl, would simply turn the entire lineage on its head, declaring the long generations to have found their true meaning in the birth of their descendant, Akbar, the perfect man.

But one more source of ancestral power and charisma would emerge at the Mughal royal court. In the very moment of the transition from Central Asia into India, Babur, the last independent Timurid prince and founder of the empire, had authored a remarkable memoir, the *Baburnama* or *Vaqi'a* (*Story of Babur* or *Events*).⁵¹ Probably intended as both a validation of Babur's right to rule and as advice literature for his sons and other Timurid princes, it has been called the first true autobiography in the Islamic world. Babur narrated his exploits, expressing grandiose imperial ambitions alongside assertions of his personal political legitimacy as a Timurid prince of impeccable lineage. Although the *Baburnama* was written in Babur's Afghan and Indian territories, it was composed in Chaghatay Turkish rather than the more ubiquitous Persian as spoken at court, an indication that it was directed to a Central Asian constituency, and that the legitimizing audience was 'comprised of the Islamized, literate, Turki-speaking Timurid and Chaghatay Mongol elite, and beyond them the broader society of Turco-Mongol military aristocrats'.⁵² Babur sent a copy of his memoir back to the capital of Kabul as early as 1529, aiming it directly at the transitional generation of refugee nobility that he hoped would coalesce around him, forming the critical backbone of his new Timurid royal court. Babur may have been prompted by a dynastic text he had carried even in his years of brigandage, a biography of his ancestor Timur, the *Zafarnama* (*Story of Victory*), which Babur seems to have revered as a dynastic token and oracle, a guide to kingship and dynastic history.⁵³

⁵¹ Babur, *Baburnama* (*Vekayi*), ed. and trans. by Mano.

⁵² Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises*, p. 41.

⁵³ Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. and trans. by Mano, p. 351. Ownership of a dynastic text as both a souvenir and even a manifestation of an ancestor is well documented. Humayun also carried a *Zafarnama*, and Shah Jahan asked that the *Baburnama* and *Zafarnama* be read to him at night.

Far more than an artefact of imperial memorabilia, Babur's own memoir would be read by his descendants as the canonical narrative of Mughal origins, translated into clear Persian at the royal court of Akbar and magnificently illustrated several times in his own and other ateliers. Perhaps inspired by the presence of this dynastic *ur-text*, Akbar requested that those members of his court who had personal memories of his father or grandfather should record them. Babur's daughter, Gulbadan Begim (1523–1603), by then an elderly *grand dame* at the royal court, wrote as a consequence to Akbar's order. In addition to Gulbadan Begim's memoir, the *Humayunnama* (*Story of Humayun*), Mihtar Jauhar, who had been Humayun's ewer-bearer and had spent twenty years at the emperor's side, including the period of his exile in Safavid Iran, composed the *Tazkirat al-waqi'at* (*Account of Events*). A soldier in Humayun's armies, Bayezid Bayat would write the *Tarikh-i Humayun* (*History of Humayun*) covering the years 1542–1591.⁵⁴ Probably also drawn to the project by the model of his dynasty's founder, Babur's great grand-son, Jahangir, would compose his own memoir, the *Jahangirnama* (*Story of Jahangir*), which confirmed his continued loyalty to his Timurid ancestral narrative. Other chroniclers and memoirists of the royal court, not least of whom we must count Abu'l Fazl, would add to the collection of intimate dynastic writings.

The Mughal dynastic memoirs would come to be highly prized and influential, representing as they did the very voice of the ancestral founding fathers, with deceptive but compelling intimacy and openness. The expectation that autobiography brings the reader closest to truth has been shattered in the modern period; but to these pre-modern state-builders, having highly personal, even intimate, texts that sprang directly from the fundamental sources of dynastic power surely added a frisson of immediacy to that which had become exemplary. Codifying an imperial memory, these remarkably influential texts would form a unifying narrative, each generation not replacing earlier writings but accumulating them into a body of near-sacred texts.

⁵⁴ The Mughal memoirs include: Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur's *Vaqai'at* (*Events*) or, as it is more commonly known, *Baburnama* (*History of Babur*); Mirza Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-i Rashidi* (*History of Rashid*); Gulbadan Begim's *Humayunnama* (*The History of Humayun*); Bayazid Bayat's *Tazkirah-i Humayun ve Akbar* (*History of Humayun and Akbar*); and Jauhar Aftabchi's *Tazkirat-i Waqi'at* (*Account of Events*). The last three are now published together in an English/Persian edition, edited and translated by Thackston as *Three Memoirs of Homayun*. The memoir written by Babur's great-grandson, the emperor Nur-al Din Muhammad Jahangir, is *Jahangirnama* (also called: *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*). See the works cited list for citations for all of the above. In addition, Akbar commissioned dynastic histories such as the *Chingisnama* (*History of Chingis Khan*), the *Timurnama* (*History of Timur*), and the *Tarikh-i Alfi* (*History of a Thousand Years*), which asserted the dynasty's Mongol and Timurid ancestry, claiming to have developed with the foundation of the South Asian Timurid (Mughal) Empire.

The memoirs of the Mughals went beyond simply narrating the legends of the ancestral past, which had for so long been a critical source of power and legitimacy. The Mughals pored over the writings of their ancestors, as their memoirs developed into an inter-generational mediation on kingship and dynasty, identity and self. Portraying drunkenness and sexuality, fear and humor, kingship, loss, and love, the voices of the idiosyncratic individuals who founded and ruled an empire were made permanent and privileged, ensuring that the historical self-narrative — the created shared memory — was unified and comprehensive. As Engseng Ho writes, '[t]he canon itself began to take on the appearance of a genealogy, and [...] the earlier texts seemed to rise in stature like ancestors, acquiring an aura of primordial generativity'.⁵⁵ In time, the inherited writings of the Mughals came to embody the very power and presence of their ancestors. At the end of their centuries-long elite genealogy, the literary texts of the dynasty stood as surrogates for long deceased cultural heroes, their pages as intermediaries linking the present to the past. Defending the legitimacy of the Baburi lineage, the memoirs had come to embody dynastic exemplars and models, standing as proxy for those personalities upon whose memories Mughal identity was based.

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⁵⁵ Ho, *The Graves of Tarim*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

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ORIGIN MYTHS AND ETHNO-REGIONAL SOLIDARITY IN OTTOMAN EGYPT: AN UNEXPECTED FINDING

Jane Hathaway

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Ottoman Egypt's military and administrative cadres were divided into two rival factions, the Faqaris and the Qasimis. They were allied with two corresponding blocs of Bedouin tribes, known as Sa'd and Ḥarām; the Sa'd were allies of the Faqaris, whilst the Ḥarām were allies of the Qasimis. Several Arabic-language chronicles of Ottoman Egypt contain origin myths purporting to explain the origins of this factional division, usually tracing the emergence of the factions to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt from the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517. This essay argues, however, that the terminology and symbolism that the myths deploy reflect a deep-seated ethno-regional rivalry that came to characterize the Ottoman military and administrative classes in the seventeenth century. Central to this rivalry was the antagonism between personnel originating in the western Ottoman territories — the Balkans and Anatolia — on the one hand, and those hailing from the empire's eastern periphery — the Caucasus — on the other. This contribution attempts to demonstrate how the origin narratives of Egypt's factions subtly reflect this 'East–West' antagonism.

The Ottoman Administration of Egypt

Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Empire in January 1517, when the Ottoman sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520) defeated the Mamluk sultan Tumanbay at

Jane Hathaway, Professor of History, Ohio State University

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Raydaniyya, just outside Cairo. The new province quickly became one of the Empire's most lucrative and strategically important, remitting more revenues than any other province and supplying critical masses of troops whilst helping to ensure Ottoman control of the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and eventually of Yemen.¹

In the 1520s, under Selim's son Süleyman I (known as 'the Magnificent' in Europe), the administration of Egypt, like that of other provinces conquered by Selim, was regularized by means of a new law code (Ottoman Turkish: *kanunname*). By the terms of this code, a governor with the rank of pasha was regularly appointed to Cairo from Istanbul, and six (later seven) regiments of Ottoman soldiery were stationed in Cairo and in Egypt's subprovinces.² At the time, many of these soldiers were recruited through the *devshirme*, the distinctively Ottoman system of collecting Christian boys from the subject population of the Balkans and Anatolia, converting them to Islam, and training them for service in the Ottoman armies or in the imperial palace. Thus, Egypt under Ottoman rule received an initial influx of personnel from Anatolia and the Balkans, often known colloquially as *Rûmîs*, after *Rûm* ('Rome'), the erstwhile territory of the Byzantine Empire.³ Yet, certain elements of the Mamluk Sultanate's administrative structure remained, above all in Egypt's subprovinces, where administrators bearing an old Mamluk title, that of *kāshif*, presided over the smaller subprovinces. At the same time, however, larger subprovinces such as Jirja fell under the authority of a new cadre of administrators with the Ottoman rank of *sanjak beyi*. In Egypt, this rank may conceivably have accommodated elements of the old Mamluk rank of *emir*.⁴

¹ Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 5–7; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 37–45.

² 'Mısır Kanunnâmesi', ed. by Barkan, pp. 355–87; Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 8–11; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 51–52; Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization*, pp. 28–40, 60–62, 189–97.

³ I have chosen to forego diacritical markings except in the cases of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish technical terms; Arabic and Ottoman Turkish proper nouns in which diacriticals serve as a guide to pronunciation; the transliterated titles of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish works; and transliterated quotations from Arabic and Ottoman Turkish works. In those cases, I follow the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. I have also chosen to substitute *sh* for the Turkish *ş* and *j* for the Turkish *c*, except in the case of quotations and citations, so as to make the pronunciation of Turkish words clear for the non-Turcophone reader.

⁴ Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 11–16; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 44–45, 51; Holt, 'The Beylicate in Ottoman Egypt', p. 223.

The Emergence of the Factions

During the seventeenth century, both the soldiery and the *sanjak beyis*, or simply *beyis*, coalesced into two rival factions, the Faqaris and the Qasimis, who were often known by the names of the Bedouin tribal blocs with whom they affiliated: respectively, Sa'd and Ḥarām. The circumstances behind the factions' emergence were for many years obscured by origin myths which, as will become clear below, took two different forms.

In *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (2003), the present author proposed a new interpretation of these origin narratives. The Faqaris took their name from the legendary double-bladed sword Dhu'l-Faqr (Turkish: *Zülfikar*) of the early Muslim hero Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. AD 661). A highly stylized version of this sword was emblazoned on some Ottoman battle flags, above all those of the Janissary regiment, the Ottoman elite infantry who made up one of Egypt's seven regiments of Ottoman soldiery. The Qasimis, for their part, were named after Qasim Bey, an influential early seventeenth-century grandee who, amongst other things, led an expedition to Yemen to counter the rebellious imam of the Zaydi Shi'ites who, then as now, dominated Yemen's northern highlands.⁵

At the same time, however, as demonstrated in the above-mentioned book, the Faqaris and Qasimis participated in the distinctive political culture of bilateral factionalism — much like the Blues and Greens of the Roman and Byzantine empires; Qays and Yemen, or 'Northern' and 'Southern' Arabs, of the early Islamic empires; or the Guelphs and Ghibellines of medieval Italy.⁶ In other words, the two factions did not represent a reversion to the multi-factional political culture of the Mamluk Sultanate, in which a faction consisted primarily of the ruling sultan's elite slaves (*mamlūks*) or those of his predecessor.⁷ For this reason, the origin myths stressed the two factions' parallel characters, the enduring competition between them, and, above all, the public markers of identity that the factions deployed to distinguish themselves, particularly during high-profile public spectacles, such as the processions that accompanied the departing pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) caravan or the arrival of a new Ottoman governor. The Faqaris and the Qasimis employed the same sorts of

⁵ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, especially pp. 149–84.

⁶ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 25–59; Hathaway, 'A Mediterranean Culture of Factions?', pp. 55–75.

⁷ Ayalon, 'Mamlūk', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vi, pp. 314–21; Irwin, 'Factions in Medieval Egypt', pp. 228–46; Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, pp. 88–90, 152–56.

markers that their antecedents had used: opposing colours (red for the Qasimis, white for the Faqaris), distinctive banners, and contrasting emblems.

Heraldic Emblems in the Origin Myths

The origin myths of the two factions take two principal forms. In one, which is reproduced in the early nineteenth-century chronicle of the Egyptian historian Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, two seventeenth-century officials named Zülfikar Bey and Qasim Bey — respectively the pilgrimage commander and the chief financial officer (*defterdar*) of Egypt — compete to see who can offer the more lavish banquet. Whilst Qasim boasts a sumptuous banquet hall, Zülfikar bests him with his far larger entourage of *mamlûks*; the narrative thus purports to explain the Faqari faction's numerical advantage as of the late seventeenth century.⁸ The more widespread and better-known origin myth, however, traces the two factions to the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, when the victorious Sultan Selim I ordered Zülfikar and Qasim, the sons of an old Mamluk *emir*, to engage in a display of traditional Mamluk chivalric exercises, known as *furûsiyya*, in front of him. In the course of the exhibition, the two brothers fell out, giving rise to the factions that bore their names. They adopted the distinguishing colours and emblems by which they continued to be known through the seventeenth century.⁹

Truncated versions of this second origin narrative sometimes leave out the Ottoman conquest and the chivalry exhibition, preferring to focus exclusively on the two factions' distinguishing colours and regalia. It is in these descriptions of the factions' accoutrements that signals of underlying ethno-regional conflict can be found. Close analysis of this truncated version of the second origin myth points to ethno-regional tension as the overriding reason for the factions' appearance, and thus links the rise of the Faqaris and the Qasimis to a brand of ethno-regional competition gripping the Ottoman Empire at large during the seventeenth century.

This abbreviated origin narrative appears in the four eighteenth-century Arabic chronicles known collectively as the 'Damurdashi group' and is repeated, with

⁸ Al-Jabarti, *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fī-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār*, ed. by Moreh, I, p. 25.

⁹ Ahmed Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarā' wa-l-bāshāt*, ed. by Abd al-Rahim, pp. 283–84; al-Jabarti, *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fī-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār*, ed. by Moreh, I, pp. 23–25. For a complementary discussion of heraldry and mythical ancestry in colonial Mesoamerica, see Jean-Paul Zuniga's essay in the present volume.

modifications, in al-Jabarti's history.¹⁰ Amongst the Damurdashi chroniclers, Ahmed Kethüda Azeban al-Damurdashi, a senior officer (*kethüda*) in the Azeban regiment, one of the above-referenced seven regiments of soldiery, provides the longest and most elaborate version:

Wa-kānat fi ayyāmihi dawlat Miṣr fi farqatayn: Sa'd wa-Ḥarām, Tubba'ī wa-Kulaybī, [Ḥusaynī] wa-Yazīdī. Al-Ḥusaynī rāyatuhu bayḍā wa-l-Yazīdī rāyatuhu ḥamrā, wa-Akrī wa-Qaysī. Wa-kunnā na'rif Sa'd wa-Ḥarām min al-mawākib: rummāna Sa'd bi-jalba mudawwara, wa-mazāriq Niṣf Ḥarām bi-jalba min ghayyir rummāna.

(In his [Baltacı Hasan Pasha, governor of Egypt 1687–88] days, the administration of Egypt was in two factions: Sa'd and Ḥarām, Tubba'ī and Kulaybī, [Ḥusaynī] and Yazīdī. The Ḥusaynī's banner was white, and the Yazīdī's banner was red. And Akrī [?] and Qaysī. We used to recognize Sa'd and Ḥarām from processions: the Sa'd's pomegranate had a circular metal plate, and the Niṣf Ḥarām's javelins had a metal plate without a pomegranate.)¹¹

Clearly, the symbols that differentiate the two factions are the *rummāna*, Arabic for 'pomegranate', and the *jalba*, which the late P. M. Holt, in a seminal article, translated as 'disk'.¹² Neither Arabic word, however, is a common term in Islamic heraldry. One must therefore conclude either that the words in this passage are standing in for more conventional heraldic terminology, or that the Faqari and the Qasimi factions deployed unusual emblems that were not encountered elsewhere in Islamic heraldry.

One clue to the identification of the 'pomegranate' and the 'disk' is the origin narrative's assertion that 'the Faqariyya [...] side with the Ottomans, and the Qasimiyya do not join with anyone but [...] the Egyptians' ('al-Faqāriyya yumaylūna

¹⁰ The Damurdashi chronicles are: Mustafa ibn Ibrahim al-Maddah al-Qinali, *Majmū' laṭīf* (Pleasant Compendium) (c. 1739); anonymous, *Kitāb al-durra al-munṣāna fi waqāi [sic] al-Kināna* (The Book of the Precious Pearl: Events in Egypt [Land of the Kinana Tribe]); and Ahmed Kethüda Azeban al-Damurdashi, *Al-Durra al-muṣāna fi akhbār al-Kināna* (The Protected Pearl: Events in Egypt [Land of the Kinana Tribe]) (c. 1755). They are discussed in Holt, 'Al-Jabarti's Introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt', pp. 38–51. Al-Jabarti, *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fi-l-tarājim wa-l-akhbār*, ed. by Moreh, I, pp. 23–25.

¹¹ Al-Damurdashi, *Al-Durra al-muṣāna fi akhbār al-Kināna*, BL, MS Or. 1073, p. 2 (fol. 1^v). See also Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, p. 24; Holt, 'Al-Jabarti's Introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt', pp. 44–45. *Niṣf*, literally 'half', is a not uncommon prefix for a Bedouin grouping; see Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 61–62.

¹² Holt, 'Al-Jabarti's Introduction to the History of Ottoman Egypt', pp. 44–45.

ilā [...] al-‘Uthmāniyyīn, wa-l-Qāsimiyya lā yu’alifūna illā [...] al-Miṣriyyīn’).¹³ This alleged preference — in combination with the convention, put forward in the non-truncated version of this origin narrative, that the factions derived from two sons of a Mamluk *emir* at the time of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt from the Mamluk Sultanate — suggests that the Sa’d’s ‘pomegranate’ must be an Ottoman heraldic device whilst the Ḥarām’s ‘disk’ must be a Mamluk Sultanate emblem. Following this line of argument, and after a thorough discussion of banners and heraldic emblems in the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate, as well as in earlier Islamic polities, the present author has concluded that the Faqaris’ ‘pomegranate’ is most likely the Ottoman *tuğ*, the golden ball from which two or three horse-tails dangle.¹⁴ Virtually all Ottoman armies, whether imperial troops or provincial forces, carried this emblem, which was strongly associated with the Ottomans and routinely included in Ottoman miniatures depicting battle scenes.¹⁵ The name of the other emblem, *jalba*, is rarely encountered in Arabic. It appears to approximate the Persian term *chalap*, meaning a metal plate. It could thus refer to the *alem* (literally, ‘sign’), a flat metal device that the armies of both the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate carried. The Ottoman *alem* was a spade-shaped emblem that ordinarily crowned a flagpole.¹⁶ The Mamluk *alem*, in contrast, was a rectangular metal lozenge, usually inscribed with the Mamluk sultan’s regnal name and titles and carried alone on a pole, much as the Ottoman *tuğ* was.¹⁷

If *rummāna* and *jalba* are defined as *tuğ* and *alem*, respectively, then this would accord with the penultimate line in the above-cited passage of the origin myth: the Sa’d’s pomegranate had a circular metal plate, whilst the Ḥarām’s javelins had a metal plate without a pomegranate. The Ottoman *tuğ* (‘pomegranate’) was typically accompanied by a flag, topped by a spade-shaped (‘circular’) *alem* (‘metal plate’), whilst the Mamluk *alem* was mounted on a staff (‘javelin’) but was not accompanied by a *tuğ*. Thus, the conclusion to be drawn from this analysis of the heraldic

¹³ Al-Jabarti, *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār fī-l-tarājīm wa-l-akbbar*, ed. by Moreh, I, p. 25. Ahmed Çelebi, curiously, has the opposite pairing: *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarā’ wa-l-bāshāt*, ed. by Abd al-Rahim, p. 284.

¹⁴ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 117–18; Żygulski, *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire*, pp. 75–89.

¹⁵ For example, Żygulski, *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire*, p. 162.

¹⁶ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, p. 114; Tezcan and Tezcan, *Türk Sancak Alemleri (Alems of Turkish Flags)*, plates 34–40, 42–54.

¹⁷ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 114–15, 117–18; Żygulski, *Ottoman Art in the Service of the Empire*, pp. 74, 89.

implications of *rummāna* and *jalba* is that the Sa'd — that is, Faqari — faction carried an Ottoman *tuğ* accompanied by an Ottoman *Zülfikar* banner crowned with an Ottoman-style, spade-shaped *alem*, whilst the Ḥarām — that is, Qasimi — faction carried an inscribed metal Mamluk Sultanate *alem*, mounted on a pole or javelin.

Ethno-Regional Connotations of 'Rummāna' and 'Jalba'

Part of the reason that *rummāna* and *jalba*, as they appear in the origin narratives, are so difficult to decipher is that they are not common heraldic designations. In virtually all cases, the devices that topped Ottoman and Mamluk flagpoles and standards were called not *rummāna* ('pomegranate') and *jalba* ('plate'), but *tuğ* and *alem*.¹⁸ This suggests that *rummāna* and *jalba* might possess more than one meaning, and that they might be employed in this passage precisely because they allude to some other feature of the two factions to which they pertain. The word *jalba* in particular has multiple possible meanings. The Arabic three-consonant root, *j-l-b*, yields verbs, verbal nouns, and adjectives related, on the one hand, to importing, bringing, or acquiring and, on the other hand, to disruption or tumult. Of particular note is *jalīb*, a foreign slave (hence someone imported and acquired), roughly equivalent to *mamlūk*, and its plural, *jalbā* or *julabā*.

It would hardly make sense, of course, to say that 'The Qasimis' javelins had foreign slaves with no pomegranate'. In such a reading, *rummāna* would also have to acquire an alternative meaning. In this context, what makes the most sense is to interpret it as a sort of 'singularization' of the collective *Rūmān*, referring to the Romans or Byzantines, but more broadly to the people of the former Byzantine territory, and thus carrying essentially the same connotation as *Rūmī* in Ottoman Turkish, which ordinarily referred to people from Anatolia and the vicinity of Istanbul, particularly those of Greek origin. If this reading is adopted, then the meaning of the line in question becomes: 'The Qasimis' standards had foreign slaves with no Rūmīs'. Admittedly, the retention of *mazāriq* ('standards', 'javelins', 'spears') here is unsatisfying unless it can be construed as a metonym, standing for the faction that carried the standards, in much the same way that the Hebrew *mateh* ('staff') denotes one of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel in the Pentateuch.¹⁹ In that case, the passage can be reinterpreted to connote that the

¹⁸ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 69–89; Tezcan and Tezcan, *Türk Sancak Alemleri (Alems of Turkish Flags)*.

¹⁹ See, for example, Numbers 30. 2.

Faqari faction consisted of Rūmīs but did not include foreign slaves, whilst the Qasimis comprised foreign slaves but contained no Rūmīs. This reinterpretation makes sense in light of the two factions' circumstances in the early seventeenth century, when they appear to have emerged.

Caucasian Mamlūks in the Qasimi Faction

The Qasimi faction appears to have originated with the following of the aforementioned Qasim Bey, known as 'the Great', who was active during the 1620s and 1630s. As Hajji Ali, a Turcophone chronicler of the last, unsuccessful Ottoman attempt to hold Yemen in the early 1630s, puts it: 'Vilāyet-i Mıṣır'da ilā yevminā hazhā bir ṭā'ife'nin tağallub ve istilāsı mu'tād olduğu gibi, ol 'aşırdā Koca Qāsim Bīk tevābi'i cūmlīye ğalebe ve ḥukkām üzerine musallaḥ olub' ('Because to this day, it is customary for one party to dominate and prevail in the province of Egypt, Qasim Bey the Great's followers at that time gained supremacy over everyone and attained mastery over the governors').²⁰ In other words, Qasim Bey had begun to amass a faction, including many *mamlūks* — elite military slaves from the Caucasus, that gave him preponderant political influence in Egypt.

One of Qasim's more troublesome *mamlūks*, the mercurial Qansuh Bey, was appointed governor of Yemen in 1629. He would be Yemen's last Ottoman governor, as it turned out, for his disastrous performance delivered the province into the hands of the Zaydi imam and his followers.²¹ In preparation for his confrontation with the Zaydis, Qansuh Bey amassed what Hajji Ali calls 'bir bölük-i ecnās-i muhtalife ve kendü gibi kölemen celbāları' ('a troop of different races, all, like him, foreign slaves').²² Here, *celbā*, the Turkish rendering of *jalbā* ('foreign slaves'), clearly refers to *mamlūks*, many, like Qansuh Bey himself, probably from the area of southern Russia known as Circassia, just northeast of the Black Sea in the Caucasus Mountains. This region had been a major source of elite slaves for the late Mamluk Sultanate;²³ by the seventeenth century, it had become a pool of man- and womanpower for the Ottoman court and for the households of many provincial governors and grandees.

Circassians and other populations from the Caucasus provided an alternative to personnel recruited through the *devshirme*. These recruits, known in the palace as

²⁰ Ali, *Abbāru'l-yamānī*, Süleymaniye Library, MS Hamidiye 886, fol. 210^r.

²¹ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 86–87, 150–51.

²² Ali, *Abbāru'l-yamānī*, Süleymaniye Library, MS Hamidiye 886, fol. 211^r.

²³ Ayalon, 'The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom', pp. 135–47.

kuls ('servants') of the sultan, had proven to be an unruly and volatile element, prone to rebellion. In 1622, most infamously, a group of *kuls* murdered Sultan Osman II (r. 1618–1622), who had attempted to supplement the Janissaries, at the time recruited almost entirely through the *devshirme*, with troops drawn from the free Muslim population, above all in Anatolia.²⁴ In the wake of Osman II's murder, his successor, Murad IV (r. 1623–1640), turned increasingly to *mamlûks* from the Caucasus.

East-West Ethno-Regional Antagonism

This reality gave rise to a pronounced ethno-regional rivalry within the Ottoman military and administrative cadres at the imperial centre and, it becomes increasingly clear, in the provinces as well. In a 1974 article, Metin Kunt described a fundamental divide — indeed, a sort of bilateral factionalism — between administrative personnel from the 'West', that is, the Balkans and Anatolia, and those from the 'East', that is, the Caucasus.²⁵ In Anatolia, this rivalry manifested itself most vividly in the conflict between rebellious provincial governors from Abkhazia, the region that now comprises north-western Georgia, and the grand viziers and army commanders, of various origins, who attempted to crush their rebellions. Thus, in 1658, the governor of Aleppo, Abaza (Abkhazian) Hasan Pasha, spearheaded a massive revolt of governors of northern Syrian and south-eastern Anatolian provinces against the reforms of the grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, an Albanian who served from 1656–1661. The rebels were to convene in the central Anatolian city of Konya for a combined assault on the grand vizier's army.²⁶ In a telling scene recounted by the famous traveller Evliya Çelebi (1611–c. 1682), Köprülü Mehmed asks Evliya's patron and relative Melek Ahmed Pasha if he will consent to attack Abaza Hasan even though he himself is an Abkhazian *mamlûk* by origin. (Melek Ahmed, unsurprisingly, agrees.)²⁷

This same ethno-regional dichotomy existed in Egypt, although it has been obscured by an insistence amongst modern-day historians on interpreting Ottoman Egypt's political culture as a virtual continuation of that of the Mamluk

²⁴ Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy*; Tezcan, 'The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul', pp. 25–43.

²⁵ Kunt, 'Ethno-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity', pp. 233–39.

²⁶ Silahdar, *Silâhđâr Târîhi*, I, pp. 132–39, 141–57.

²⁷ Kunt, 'Ethno-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity', p. 238.

Sultanate.²⁸ In the decades following the Ottoman incorporation of Egypt, as pointed out above, the provincial military and administrative apparatus absorbed large numbers of *kuls* of *devshirme*, hence ‘Western’, origin. Imperial orders from the sultan to the governor of Egypt, along with chronicles produced at the Ottoman court and by Arabophone historians in Cairo, describe numerous *beys* and other administrators of late sixteenth-century Egypt who were obviously *devshirme* recruits or sons of influential Ottoman officials. Amongst these were Perviz Majar (‘the Hungarian’), the tyrannical governor (*kāshif*) of Gharbiyya subprovince in the western Nile Delta; Behram Bey, the son of the Ottoman governor of Yemen; and Mehmed Reis, son of the famous Ottoman admiral Piri Reis, who became commander of the elite Müteferrika regiment.²⁹ By 1600, these elements had apparently turned Cairo into a veritable *kul* capital, much like Istanbul itself at this time. In 1609, the governor Öküz Mehmed Pasha brutally crushed a rebellion by Egypt’s two long-suffering cavalry regiments, who received the lowest salaries of the seven regiments whilst shouldering the burdens of quelling Bedouin revolts and chasing brigands in the countryside. This success earned Öküz Mehmed the sobriquet *Kul Kıran*, or ‘breaker of the *kuls*’.³⁰

Rıdvan Bey’s Circassian Genealogy

In the wake of this incident and in the wake of Osman II’s murder by palace *kuls*, larger and larger numbers of *mamlûks* from the Caucasus entered palace service and all ranks of the provincial administration, from the governors to the regimental soldiery. Egypt exemplified this pattern. Around the same time that Qansuh Bey was assembling his troop of elite slaves, another Circassian chieftain of the Qasimi faction, Rıdvan Bey, known as Abu al-Shawarib (‘moustachioed’), commissioned a work that would become one of the most enduring, if misunderstood, testaments

²⁸ See, e.g., Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 45, 73–101; Ayalon, ‘Studies in al-Jabarti I’, pp. 148–74, 275–325; Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule*, pp. 47–77.

²⁹ These figures appear in the available primary sources as follows. Perviz Majar: Safi, *Muṣṭafā Ṣāfi’nin ‘Zübdetü’-tevarih’i*, ed. by Çuhadar, II, p. 90; Al-Ishaqi, *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal fi man taṣarrafa fi Miṣr al-Qāhira min arbāb al-duwal*, pp. 167–68; Behram Bey: Istanbul, Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Mühimme Defteri 4, no. 644 (4 Şaban 967/30 April 1560); Mehmed Reis: Istanbul, Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives, Mühimme Defteri 2, no. 2038 (7 Cemazi-yülevvel 964/8 March 1557).

³⁰ Hathaway, ‘The “Mamluk-Breaker” Who Was Really a *Kul*-Breaker’, pp. 93–109; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, pp. 74–76.

to this critical mass of elite slaves from the Caucasus in a major province. The work in question is a sort of genealogical chronicle purporting to show that Rıdvan Bey was, like all Circassians, descended from the Quraysh — the northern Arabian tribal confederation to which the Prophet Muhammad belonged — although not from the Prophet himself.³¹ The ultimate aim of the work seems to be that of demonstrating Rıdvan Bey's suitability for the lucrative and influential post of commander of the Egyptian pilgrimage caravan to Mecca.³² This 'exalted lineage' was not the brainchild of Rıdvan Bey's genealogist, whose identity is unknown; it tapped instead into a venerable tradition, later remarked by Evliya Çelebi, of the descent of the Circassians and other Caucasian peoples from Arab populations of various kinds who had fled to the Caucasus in the course of the original Muslim conquests of the Levant in the 630s AD.³³ This tradition seems to have evolved in conjunction with legends of the fate of the last king of Ghassān, an Arab Christian client kingdom of the Byzantine Empire which was defeated by the early Muslim armies in AD 636. The Ghassanid king, Jabala ibn al-Ayham, fled to central Anatolia and continued in Byzantine service; one of his descendants even reigned as Emperor Nicephorus (AD 802–811).³⁴ Nonetheless, various traditions claim that Jabala and his brothers ultimately settled in the Caucasus and gave rise to several Caucasian peoples, including the original Albanians, who later migrated to their current Balkan homeland.

Some traditions even cite Jabala as the ancestor of the Circassians, even though the Ghassanids were not related to the Quraysh. Rıdvan Bey's genealogist, however, is determined to demonstrate his patron's Qurayshi descent. He is therefore careful not to ascribe Circassian origins — and thus Rıdvan Bey's lineage — to the Ghassanid king but to invoke a parallel narrative of a neighbouring Arab tribal chieftain, Kisa or Kes. Kisa fled the Arabian Peninsula alongside the Ghassanid king, settled in a different part of the Caucasus, and became the ancestor of the Circassians.³⁵

³¹ Anonymous, *Nisba sharīfa wa-risāla munīfa tashtamil 'ala dbikr nasb al-Jarākisa min Quraysh*, Princeton University Library, Garrett Manuscripts Collection, MS 186H; Holt, 'The Exalted Lineage of Ridwan Bey', pp. 221–30.

³² Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, p. 152.

³³ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 153–55; Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. by Kahrman and others, VI, p. 58; VII, pp. 273–86; X, p. 52; Nogmow, *Die Sagen und Lieder des Tscherkessen-Volks*, trans. by Bergé, pp. 44–46.

³⁴ Shahid, 'Ghassān Post-Ghassān', pp. 324–25.

³⁵ The name 'Circassians' — *Sarākisa* or, more commonly, *Jarākisa* in Arabic — is supposed to have come from 'Kisa fled' (*sāra Kisa*).

Unlike the Ghassanid king, Kisa was a member of the Quraysh. In a predominantly Muslim society such as that of seventeenth-century Egypt, nothing conferred legitimacy like descent from the Prophet Muhammad. Rıdvan Bey could not claim Prophetic descent, but he could, through his genealogist's skillful manipulation of origin traditions, claim the next best thing, namely, Qurayshi descent. Since the Quraysh, who took control of Mecca in the fifth century AD, were custodians of the Ka'ba and supervisors of the annual pre-Islamic animist pilgrimage during their two hundred-year dominance of the city, descent from them implicitly gave Rıdvan Bey, and Circassian grandees more generally, a genealogical claim to the command of the pilgrimage.

To further Rıdvan's claim to the Egyptian pilgrimage command, his genealogist provides him with an ancestral link to Egypt, as well. The bey, the genealogy asserts, is the grandson of a Circassian named Rüstem ibn Timraz, a descendant of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay (r. 1422–1438), who relocated to Circassia as a teenager in the wake of Selim I's conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate.³⁶ Rüstem's flight from Egypt recapitulates Kisa's flight from the Levant, which resulted in the genesis of the Circassian people. Meanwhile, the trigger for this flight, Selim's conquest, is identical to the trigger for the emergence of the two factions in the Faqari-Qasimi origin myth. Decades later, the genealogy claims, various Ottoman statesmen implored Rüstem to return to Egypt, but he refused, fearing for his life. Indeed, the later Mamluk Sultanate had been dominated by Circassians, and any effort to re-establish a Circassian presence in Egypt could be seen as an attempt to resurrect the defeated regime. Only with Rıdvan's importation to Egypt as a *mamlūk*, presumably in the early seventeenth century, was the family link to Egypt restored. His 'return' to Egypt fulfilled the Circassians' destiny, but in a solidly Ottoman context since the Mamluk Sultanate was by now a distant memory, and Circassians were now acceptable in Ottoman Egypt.

Selim's conquest of Egypt is not the only element in the genealogy that evokes the origin narrative of the Faqari and Qasimi factions. The overall focus on Circassians does so as well, since in the seventeenth century, Circassia was the primary source of the 'foreign slaves' who populated the Qasimi faction. By demonstrating that Circassians were descended from the same clan as the Prophet Muhammad, the genealogy buttressed the case for a Qasimi claim to the office of pilgrimage commander, which at the time was monopolized by a Faqari chieftain, also named Rıdvan Bey. The Rūmīs of the Faqari faction could make no such claim of

³⁶ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, p. 155; Anonymous, *Nisba sharīfa wa-risāla munīfa tashtamil 'ala dhikr nasb al-Jarākisa min Quraysh*, fols 17^v–18^r. The blood tie to Barsbay is apparently entirely invented.

Qurayshi descent — nor, for that matter, could the Faqari Rıdvan Bey, who was a Georgian *mamlūk*.³⁷ In this fashion, the genealogy not only rehabilitates the Circassians but seeks to place them above other populations in a constructed Ottoman ethno-regional hierarchy.

To underline his Circassian pride, in fact, Rıdvan Abu al-Shawarib named two of his seven sons Kushqadam and Özbek. These were unmistakable references to the Mamluk Sultan Khushqadam, who ruled from 1461–67 and who, as it happens, was not ethnically Circassian but a Greek from Asia Minor (hence a *Rūmī*), and to the famous Mamluk general Özbek or Azbak.³⁸ Some thirty-five years after the genealogy's composition, Evliya Çelebi befriended Özbek Bey, who was an influential local notable during the traveller's stay in Cairo.³⁹ Özbek also appears, as do Khushqadam and a third son, Mahmud, in various Turcophone chronicles of Ottoman Egypt.⁴⁰ They, like the genealogy itself, bespeak significant demographic change amongst Ottoman Egypt's military and administrative cadres during the seventeenth century. Indeed, Evliya reports large numbers of Circassians amongst the province's grandees, a circumstance which would have been all but unthinkable a century earlier, when the Mamluk Sultanate and the handful of revolts that had attempted to reconstitute it were still relatively recent memories.⁴¹

'Sons of the Arabs' vs. 'Sons of Rūm' as Members of Egypt's Factions

The presence of Circassian *mamlūks* amongst the Qasimi faction's leadership in the seventeenth century could explain the reference in the factional origin myth to *jalba*

³⁷ Rıdvan Bey al-Faqari nonetheless served as pilgrimage commander for twenty-five years, from 1631 until his death in 1656. He was so influential that for many years, the accepted wisdom was that he, rather than Abu al-Shawarib, had commissioned the genealogy. Holt, 'The Exalted Lineage of Ridwan Bey', pp. 224–27. On Rıdvan Bey al-Faqari's life, see al-Muhibbi, *Khulāṣat al-āthār fi a'yān al-qarn al-ḥādī'ashar*, II, pp. 164–66; al-Jabarti, *'Ajā'ib al-āthār fi-l-tarājīm wa-l-akhbār*, I, p. 234.

³⁸ Anonymous, *Nisba sharīfa wa-risāla munīfa tashtamil 'ala dhikr nasb al-Jarākisa min Quraysh*, fols 19^v–20^r. On the Mamluk sultan Khushqadam and general Özbek, see Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, pp. 47, 94–100.

³⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. by Kahraman and others, x, pp. 282, 503; MacKay, 'The Manuscripts of the *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi — Part I', pp. 278, 293.

⁴⁰ Hathaway, 'The Exalted Lineage of Rıdvan Bey Revisited', p. 99 n. 11, and the sources cited there.

⁴¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. by Kahraman and others, x, pp. 91, 274, 282–83; Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, p. 163; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule*, pp. 52–56.

in the sense of a body of elite slaves. But what of the origin myth's apparent reference to Rûmîs? This, too, can be explained by Egypt's political culture in the first half of the seventeenth century, just when *mamlûks* from the Caucasus were beginning to challenge the *kul* hegemony in the Ottoman military-administrative hierarchy. Several chroniclers recount an incident in 1647, when the Ottoman governor Haydar Aghazade Mehmed Pasha banned what the chroniclers call *evlād-i 'Arab* (Arabic: *awlād al-'Arab*, literally 'sons of the Arabs') from the seven regiments of soldiery. As the Turcophone chronicler of Egypt Mehmed ibn Yusuf al-Hallaq relates:

Yedi bölüğün içinde ne kadar evlād-i 'Arab varsa, eğer Mısırlı ve eğer Şamlı ve eğer Halebli, eğer Bağdādî, eğer 'Acem, eğer Özbek, cümlesi Bayram mevâcibine değin 'ulûfeleri ferâğat idüp, satan satsun, varsa satmıyup kalursa, bi'l-kullîye ref ' olunsun.

(However many *evlād-i 'Arab* there are in the seven regiments — be they Cairene, Damascene, Aleppine, Baghdadi, Persian, Uzbek — their stipends must be ceded and sold before the Bayram payday [the bonus payday at the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan]; any remaining unsold will be cancelled.)⁴²

Obviously, a group that included Persians and Uzbeks cannot have been Arab in the modern sense of that term. Instead, the *evlād-i 'Arab* were probably localized elements of various ethno-regional origins, but they certainly were neither *mamlûks* nor *devshirme* recruits.⁴³ However, if they included Persians and Uzbeks, they would presumably have belonged to the 'Eastern' side of the ethno-regional divide within the Ottoman administration. When they appear in the Egyptian chronicles, the *evlād-i 'Arab* are almost always contrasted with a population known as *Rûm oğlanı*, or 'sons of Rûm'. Just after noting the disbarment of the *evlād-i 'Arab* from the payrolls of Egypt's seven regiments of Ottoman soldiery, al-Hallaq recounts:

Yeniçeri tâ'îfesi ekseri evlād-i 'Arab olmağın, haber gönderdiler ki 'Evlād-i 'Arab çıkarsak, lâzım gelen hidmet-i pâdişâhî'ye kim gider?' dinledikde, 'Alî Bey eyitdi, 'Bende Rûm oğlanı sekban çokdur; onların yerine چراغ ıderim'.

(Since the Janissary corps was mostly *evlād-i 'Arab*, [the officers] responded, 'If we expel the *evlād-i 'Arab*, who will go to perform the necessary sultan service?' Hearing this, Ali Bey replied, 'I have many *Rûm oğlanı* mercenaries. I will promote them instead of [the *evlād-i 'Arab*].')⁴⁴

⁴² Al-Hallaq, *Tārîh-i Mısr-ı Kahire*, Istanbul University Library, T. Y. 628, fol. 149^{r-v}.

⁴³ Hathaway, 'The *Evlād-i Arab* ('Sons of the Arabs') in Ottoman Egypt', pp. 207, 212–14.

⁴⁴ Al-Hallaq, *Tārîh-i Mısr-ı Kahire*, Istanbul University Library, T. Y. 628, fol. 149^r.

Since Rûm refers to Anatolia, with, perhaps, the addition of the eastern Balkans, 'sons of Rûm' presumably refers to soldiers from that region, or at least children of such soldiers. They were probably not *devshirme* recruits but rather, as the passage implies, mercenaries or perhaps volunteers from Anatolia and the eastern Balkans. This, if anything, makes the 'sons of' prefix all the more appropriate since, unlike *devshirme* boys, they would have been free-born Muslims who grew up with their parents. However, the fathers of these soldiers may well have included *devshirme* recruits. Both of these contrasting populations — the *evlād-i 'Arab* and the *Rûm oğlanı* — always appear as 'children of' or 'sons of', as if to emphasize not simply that they are different, and rival, populations but that they are separated by a genealogical divide going back countless generations.

The Faqari Leaders Ali and Rıdvan vs. the Qasimi Leaders Qansuh and Memi

In the passage just cited, the Faqari leader Ali Bey clearly opts for *Rûm oğlanı* — that is, 'Westerners' — over *evlād-i 'Arab*, or 'Easterners', in his private army. His preference has major implications for the Faqari and Qasimi factions because Ali Bey was a founder of the Faqari faction, or at least the first grandee to be called 'Faqari', according to the seventeenth-century traveller Evliya Çelebi. Travelling through Upper Egypt, Evliya came across a mosque that Ali Bey had built in Jirja, capital of the enormous subprovince of the same name, which Ali governed, and recorded the foundation inscription:

Şimdi Circe hâkimi, şir-i Hudâ, ehl-i kerem
Zülfikârî Mîr 'Alî der şâhib-i tabl ü 'alem,
Emr-i Hağ'la feyz-i Rabbânî ana oldu delîl,
Bu müşerref câmi'i yapıdı dahi iki sebîl.
Kâtibî didi, 'Anın târihini bil ey hümâm.
Sene bîñ altmış birinde bu binâ' oldu tamâm'.

(Now the governor of Jirja, lion of God, of the people of beneficence
Zülfikârî Mîr Ali, master of drum [i.e., a military band] and standard,
With the divine order and divine blessing as a guide,
Has constructed this noble mosque, as well as two fountains.
Kâtibî [the poet] said, 'Know its date, o great prince.
This edifice was completed in 1061 [1651]'.)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. by Kahraman and others, x, p. 420.

The poet describes Ali Bey as ‘lion of God’ and ‘of the people of beneficence’, terms ordinarily reserved for the early Islamic hero Ali ibn Abi Talib. Likewise, ‘Zülfikārī’, ostensibly a reference to the Faqari faction, also signifies that Ali Bey, like Ali ibn Abi Talib, carried the legendary double-bladed sword, Zülfikar. But whereas Ali ibn Abi Talib carried the actual sword, Ali Bey would probably have carried a banner bearing the likeness of the sword. Such banners were common in the Ottoman army and navy, above all amongst the Janissaries, who were devoted to Ali ibn Abi Talib. Since Egypt’s Janissary regiment was a Faqari stronghold in the seventeenth century, it would have been appropriate for the Faqari leader to wield such a banner. Ottoman Zülfikar flags are highly distinctive: the sword is always displayed standing alone rather than held in someone’s hand. It is, moreover, decidedly anthropomorphic, with the two blades appearing as ‘legs’ and the quillons as ‘arms’.⁴⁶ If Ali Bey carried such a banner, then it would have been the source of the sobriquet Zülfikārī, which Evliya noticed in the mosque inscription, and, in addition, the source of the Faqari faction’s name.

Ali Bey had established a working partnership with Rıdvan Bey, the long-serving pilgrimage commander mentioned above. So long as Rıdvan held the post of pilgrimage commander and Ali served as governor of Jirja, the two men monopolized the two most lucrative administrative posts in seventeenth-century Egypt. Although the sobriquet Zülfikārī, or its Arabic variant Faqari, was never attached to Rıdvan during his lifetime, his partnership with Ali made him, in effect, the second Faqari, and by the early eighteenth century all Arabic chronicles of Ottoman Egypt depict him as the paramount leader of the faction, and even as one of its founders.⁴⁷ As noted above, Rıdvan was a Georgian *mamlūk*. Ali was likewise a *mamlūk* from the Caucasus, although his precise ethno-regional background is unknown. Both *beys* acquired *mamlūks* of their own from the Caucasus and nurtured their protégés so that they, in turn, became influential grandees in Egypt. For the rank and file of their private armies, however, Ali and Rıdvan preferred *Rūm oğları*, that is, mercenaries and volunteers from Anatolia. This meant that in its earliest incarnation, the Faqari faction was led by two Caucasian *mamlūks*, at least one of whom was Georgian, who presided over a rank-and-file membership of mainly Anatolian mercenaries.

⁴⁶ Hathaway, ‘The Forgotten Icon’, pp. 1–13.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Akbbār al-nuwwāb min dawlat Āl ‘Uthmān min hīn istawala ‘ālayhā al-sultān Salīm Khān*, Topkapı Palace Library, MS Hazine 1623, fols 24^{r-v}, 26^v; Ahmed Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarā’ wa-l-bāshāt*, ed. by Abd al-Rahim, pp. 151–52; al-Jabarti, *‘Ajā’ib al-āthār fi-l-tarājim wa-l-akbbār*, ed. by Moreh, I, p. 107.

As noted above, the rival Qasimi faction apparently originated with Qasim Bey 'the Great' in the early 1630s, whose *mamlūk* Qansuh Bey amassed an army of 'foreign slaves'. Some ten years later, a second Qansuh, also a *mamlūk* of Qasim Bey, and his ally Memi (or Mamay) Bey set up a parallel (and rival) partnership to that of Rıdvan and Ali. Both Qansuh and Memi were Circassians; whilst Qansuh was the *mamlūk* of Qasim Bey, Memi's patron is unknown. Like Rıdvan and Ali, Qansuh and Memi built up private armies; they, however, preferred not Anatolian mercenaries (*Rūm oğlanı*) but locals of various 'Eastern' ethnicities (*evlād-i 'Arab*).

Qansuh Bey was *qā'im maqām*, the stand-in for a deposed governor, when the newly appointed governor Haydar Aghazade Mehmed Pasha arrived in Cairo in 1646. According to al-Hallaq, the new governor allowed Qansuh and Memi to determine all appointments within the provincial administration. The two persuaded Haydar Aghazade to petition the Ottoman sultan to appoint Memi pilgrimage commander, displacing Rıdvan Bey, and Qansuh governor of Jirja, displacing Ali Bey. As an ostensible reward for his decade-and-a-half of service as pilgrimage commander, Rıdvan was assigned the governorship of the distant province of Habesh (Abyssinia), comprising present-day Eritrea and Djibouti, plus the coastal regions of Sudan and parts of northern Ethiopia. He refused to depart from Cairo, however, and whilst he delayed, Ali marched down from Jirja with his army of four thousand *Rūm oğlanı* mercenaries, armed with matchlocks, to confront Qansuh's and Memi's forces. Intimidated, Haydar Aghazade Mehmed Pasha withdrew his support from Qansuh and Memi, who were arrested and ultimately executed. But rather than making his peace with Rıdvan and Ali, and despite issuing an order to bar *evlād-i 'Arab* from the regiments, as noted earlier, the governor now attempted to confiscate the two *beys*' properties. At this point, Rıdvan and Ali petitioned the Ottoman sultan to depose him.⁴⁸

This battle pitting Ali and Rıdvan against Qansuh and Memi was apparently the first armed conflict between the Faqari and Qasimi factions. And whilst the commanders of both factions were *mamlūks* from the Caucasus, the factions' rank and file broke down into the by-then-familiar East–West dichotomy: the Faqaris were 'Westerners' from Anatolia and vicinity, the Qasimis 'Easterners' from various parts of Asia. This division was not absolute even in the early seventeenth century, and it did not endure. By the early eighteenth century, when the factional origin myths enjoyed their widest circulation, both factions were drawing members, both high- and low-ranking, from a variety of pools of manpower: Anatolian mercenaries, Caucasian *mamlūks*, Arabic-speaking locals, tribal populations, and so on. As

⁴⁸ Al-Hallaq, *Tārīh-i Mısr-ı Kahire*, Istanbul University Library, T. Y. 628, fols 140^v–153^v.

P. M. Holt has noted, the Qasimi faction by the late seventeenth century contained a marked Bosnian element that included two of the faction's chieftains, Ahmed Bey Bushnak ('the Bosniak') and Ibrahim Bey Abu Shanab ('moustachioed').⁴⁹ The Faqaris, during the same general period, accumulated large numbers of mercenaries from central and western Anatolia, as attested by the ascendancy within the faction of the Kazdağlı household, founded by a Janissary recruit from the Kazdağı, or Mount Ida in what is now western Turkey.⁵⁰

Ironically, the stories of factional divergence achieved maximum circulation and popularity just as the factions were nearing desuetude. For not only were the Faqaris and the Qasimis becoming more similar in make-up by the early eighteenth century; by the 1730s, they were also becoming obsolete and irrelevant. By this time, the Kazdağlı household, which had originated some sixty years earlier as a Faqari subunit based in Egypt's Janissary regiment, had come to dominate all seven regiments of soldiery and was encroaching on the rank of *bey*, as well. By the time the French invaded Egypt in 1798, households with their roots in the Kazdağlı conglomerate ran the province, whilst the duelling factions were an increasingly dim memory.⁵¹

This was the context in which origin narratives of the sort reproduced in the Damurdashi chronicles and in al-Jabarti's history became popular. These narratives, unsurprisingly, emphasize the dichotomous character of the two factions: their origins in two warring brothers, their contrasting colours and heraldic devices, and their clashing loyalties — the Faqaris, according to al-Jabarti, allied with 'the Ottomans', the Qasimis with 'the Egyptians',⁵² meaning, presumably, the Mamluk Sultanate. The people reading or, more likely, hearing these stories would not have recognized the reference to Rūmīs and foreign slaves, but this would not have detracted from their appreciation of the myths or diluted their meaningfulness. In fact, it is precisely because of this latter-day misapprehension that the 'inside joke' of the origin narratives has remained undeciphered for so long.

⁴⁹ Holt, 'The Beylicate in Egypt', pp. 224–25; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, p. 73.

⁵⁰ Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 60–62.

⁵¹ Hathaway, *A Tale of Two Factions*, pp. 10, 11–12, 28, 53, 77, 122.

⁵² Al-Jabarti, *ʿAjāʾib al-āthār fī-l-tarājīm wa-l-akḥḥār*, ed. by Moreh, I, p. 24; see also Ahmed Çelebi, *Awḍaḥ al-ishārāt fī man tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-wuzarāʾ wa-l-bāshāt*, ed. by Abd al-Rahim, p. 284.

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THE IDOL OF ORIGINS: MYTH, GENEALOGICAL MEMORY, AND LAW IN HISPANIC AMERICA*

Jean-Paul Zuniga

For historians, the term *mythical genealogies* is something of a pleonasm, such is the closeness of the two words. Not only are ‘myth’ and ‘origin’ so often used together (is it not the case that myth very often functions as an account of origins?), but one could also say that all profound genealogical memory is, ultimately, simply a form of mythology, because it is based on ancestors who are very often imagined, and whose existence is more a result of family tradition than proven certitudes. Or to put it another way, to paraphrase Durkheim, genealogy is a discourse, a necessarily *a posteriori* ideological justification of the present moment.¹ Now, even though genealogy may actually be an extremely effective rhetorical device, the practical categories mobilized by it, and even the vocabulary through which genealogical connections are clearly expressed, are not capable of revealing the social complexity as a whole. This tension between argumentative elements and resources of proof, on the one hand, and the principles regulating the social order, on the other hand, constitute one of the starting points of this contribution.

It is certain that in many societies genealogy is a powerful tool for classifying social affairs. Moreover, it introduces a principle of causality which is supposedly based on nature because it is inspired by the cycle of life itself, and notably by the succession of the generations: parents are at the origin and thus necessarily

* Essay translated by Amanda J. Haste, Ph.D.

¹ On the complex definitions of kinship in Durkheim, see Porqueres, ‘Religion et parenté dans *Les formes élémentaires*’, pp. 409–27.

Jean-Paul Zuniga, Centre de recherches historiques, École des hautes études en sciences sociales

precede the children they engender. The fact that the succession of the generations can serve metaphorically to evoke, explain, and incarnate a wide range of social facts, whose causal sequence may thus be objectified 'by sudden perception of an objective relation', in the words of Robert Nisbet, enthrones its rhetorical incorporation as a form of reasoning.² Hence, genealogical reason is durably installed as a *principle of evidence* in different forms of rhetoric, whatever the fact, law, or character being demonstrated. Genealogy as an explanation of origin, as a narrative of the succession of generations and as a causal metaphor (Marc Bloch's 'idol of origins') is thus intimately linked to the very notion of history.

Anthropology, which has long considered family relationships to be one of the favoured fields of analysis, has, however, been one of the first disciplines to reflect on the status of the genealogical narrative. Indeed, this issue was inscribed in the vast research protocol which anthropology presented to the social sciences at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly through the work of Marcel Mauss on the social foundations of the categories of thought, and that of Rivers on the genealogical method.³ The shift undergone by the concept of generation from a status of observed reality to that of the very incarnation of the idea of causality is therefore probably only an example of this process.

Yet, despite this physiological foundation, one must stress the fragility of the genealogical construction in the face of the passage of time. Indeed, as genealogy plunges further and further back into the past, it loses its capacity to be substantiated by positive deeds and thus falls into a sphere of mere imaginings, which are socially shared to a greater or lesser degree. It becomes then a mere causal referent, highly phantasmal (without, however, obliterating its effectiveness), invoked rather than proven. It is only its stability *as a constantly repeated narrative* which works as evidence: as long as it is told by everyone, and received as *true* by everyone, the genealogical narration does not require to be proven.⁴ In the early modern period, proving one's genealogy most often meant putting into writing that which stemmed from a local or family tradition, and was supported by individuals who

² Sir Herbert Read, *English Prose Style*, quoted in Nisbet, 'Genealogy, Growth, and Other Metaphors', p. 351.

³ Mauss, 'Une catégorie de l'esprit humain', pp. 263–81. See also Durkheim and Mauss, 'De quelques formes primitives de classification', pp. 1–72, and Rivers, 'The Genealogical Method of Anthropological Inquiry', pp. 1–12.

⁴ 'Dans le vocabulaire courant, les origines sont un commencement qui explique. Pis encore: qui suffit à expliquer' ('In our current vocabulary, origins are a beginning which explains. Even worse: which is sufficient to explain'). Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, p. 6.

confirmed the soundness of such a reputation.⁵ It is no less true that, in many respects, even these objectivized forms of genealogy are only constructions. By construction, I mean the subjective choice of either a sole forebear (which may, however, change over time)⁶ or of a sole lineage among all of an individual's different possible ancestors, so as to present it as the determining element, as well as the pure invention of a prestigious or yearned-for origin. These two mechanisms do indeed share a common trait: they are both broadly imaginary, unreal, or more or less idealized, and in direct contact with the present time of the site of utterance. This pragmatic aspect is consequently fundamental to the analysis of the different idealizations of the ancestry and will be the main theme of this contribution.

This study provides different examples of the usage of mythical genealogies in a colonial environment. To do this, the focus will be put on the different usages of genealogy in early modern Hispanic America, through three stagings of the mythical memory of ancestors by different actors. Firstly, I shall analyse the genealogical content of a codex presented in a case of land ownership at the royal courthouse of Mexico in the last third of the sixteenth century; then I will turn to the dynastic elements exhibited in a pictorial representation of the celebration of Corpus Christi at Cuzco in the seventeenth century; and, lastly, the quarrel which arose from the publication of a genealogical volume in Lima in the first third of the seventeenth century will be studied. Through these three cases I will show the utility of studying genealogies in a dialogical manner, i.e. as a language demanding to be analysed in terms of context of enunciation, interlocutors involved and purposes aimed at.

I argue that the genealogical rhetoric constitutes a field of shared referents — even if built up of misunderstandings and distortions — that opens the possibility of confrontation and negotiation between social actors. I will finally point out that as a powerful tool for asserting and defending rights, this rhetoric has a performative role in the emergence of collective actors. As such, it has to be considered as a multifaceted means of expression and action rather than a structured and coherent vision of the world. The example of this genealogical language will serve as a basis

⁵ In many societies it is common to have a memory of one's ancestors which goes back three to five generations, beyond this threshold the memory becomes more and more imprecise and vague. Rivers, 'The Genealogical Method of Anthropological Inquiry', pp. 1–12; Barnes, 'Genealogies', in *The Craft of Social Anthropology*, ed. by Epstein, p. 120. Quoted by Porqueres, *Genealogia y antropología*, p. 33.

⁶ For the connections between the context and the changes it produces in a genealogical narrative, see Heather 'Cassiodorus and the Rise of the Amals', pp. 103–28. The figure of King Ermenaric, absent in the early genealogies of the Goths, but important after the sixth century, is a good example.

for a reflection allowing to enlarge on our conclusions in order to apply them to fields other than genealogy itself.

Expressing the Legitimate Possession: Mexico c. 1572

As early as the first years of the Spanish conquest, a significant number of genealogical documents were produced by the autochthonous élites, especially in the Mesoamerican case in which these representations had had a long tradition.⁷ These documents, a mixture of texts — mainly glosses — and iconographic representations, consisted as much of individual statements as of dynastic histories very often presented in court as valid evidence. In both cases, their aim was to prove legitimacy: either that of the right to the possession of land (and of the concomitant injustice of its expropriation by others), or that of the temporal power of a *cacique*, or ethnic chief, over a community. This is clearly shown by the example of the prominent families of La Mixteca, the region situated in the south-east of Mexico, between the mountains of the Sierra Mixteca and the Pacific Ocean, which have been studied by John Monaghan. It is clear that these families presented themselves as the descendants of the former traditional chiefs of the Mixtec people, and based the hereditary land rights that they effectively enjoyed up to the nineteenth century on the possession of ancient genealogical codices.⁸ A more prosaic mobilization of the ancestors in order to defend land rights is found in many of the cases brought before the courts of New Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹ Genealogical codices and representations were then a means to corroborate the antiquity of the possession of familial or community lands, and an argument to protect them from the attempts of expropriation made by usurpers, whether Hispanic or not.¹⁰

⁷ Olko, 'Genealogías indígenas del centro de México', pp. 141–62.

⁸ Monaghan, 'Mixtec Codices', pp. 415–26. See also Chance, 'Marriage Alliances among Colonial Mixtec Elites', pp. 91–123.

⁹ See the genealogies of Zolin on a Tlaxcaltec painting on a leaf of agave made in the sixteenth century (Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico), which lists six generations of offspring of the ancestor Zolin to justify the possession of lands. See <<http://www.codices.inah.gob.mx/pc/index.php>>. Similarly, the Codex Tolteca-Chichimeca of the Bibliothèque nationale de France serves to demonstrate the way in which the Moquiuhixcas, a lineage of Chichimeque origins from the region of Cuauhtinchan (Puebla), had obtained their lands, in order to legitimize them to the colonial authorities. See the critical edition by Kirchhoff, Güemes, and Reyes García, *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*.

¹⁰ The upheavals of the conquest led indeed to the extinction of many noble lineages, which paved the way to claims for lands by other sectors of the native society.

Furthermore, the genealogical model also forms the basis of the histories of the origin of peoples (or rulers) who owned the land when the European invaders arrived. They constitute the mythical account of the origin of a group as well as the affirmation of its right to possess a territory or to benefit from prerogatives, such as the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (see note 9), creating an intimate link between these two aims.

This intertwining doubtless explains the fact that in Mesoamerica a number of codices created for different purposes, sometimes long after the Spanish conquest, regularly detail all, or fragments of, the mythical account of the migration of the Nahua people from a northern origin to the Valley of Mexico, where these groups finally settled. This vagrancy constitutes the myth of origins which is common to the different related Nahua groups (Mexica, Tepaneca, Xochimilca, Chalca, Acolhua, Tlahuica, and Tlaxcalteca), who successively established themselves in the Valley of Mexico, and who are all supposed to have come from the seven ancestral caves of Chicomoztoc (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. 'The Seven Caves of Chicomoztoc in the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca*', Paris, BNF, MSS Mexicain 46–58, fol. 16^r. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of Gallica.bnf.fr. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.

From the moment when the Tenochca Mexica (founders of Mexico-Tenochtitlan) became the valley's hegemonic group, this account underwent a change in which a special role was given to the mythical Aztlan (the eponym of Aztec).¹¹ This modification has often been attributed either to *tlatoani* (leader or chief) Itzcoatl (1427–1440), or to his advisor (and nephew) Tlacaelel, a priest who also advised Itzcoatl's successors, Moctezuma Ilhuicamina (1440–1469) and Axayacatl (1469–1481). In his magnum opus, *The General History of the Things of New Spain* (also known as The Florentine Codex), the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún, particularly recalls the fact that Itzcoatl and his advisors were thought to have burnt the old codex to avoid its falling 'into the hands of the vulgar and becoming misunderstood',¹² and so that the ancient stories could not be 'misconstrued'.¹³ Diego Duran in his *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España* and Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc in his *Cronica Mexicana*, on the other hand, emphasize the role of Tlacaelel.¹⁴ In any event, independently of the possible role played by any particular one of these individuals, the fact remains that the codices relating the history of the Mexica people have constituted, from their conception, corner-stone documents for connecting the account of their origins to the justification and legitimation of the Mexica hegemony among the *altepetl* (city-states) of the Valley of Mexico.

The long migration of the Mexica simultaneously represents the mythologized narration of the passage from the savagery of the nomad Chichimec people to that of the civilized sedentary life, connected to the Toltec heritage, the quintessence of culture and wisdom for the Mesoamerican peoples (Chichimeca meaning "savage" in nahuatl, as opposed to Tolteca, "civilized"). The long stay of the Mexica at Chapultepec, under the authority of Colhuacan, the famous city reputed to be

¹¹ The motif of Chicomoztoc recurs in the *Codex Azcatitlan* (BNF), the *Codex Aubin* (British Museum Am2006, Drg. 31219), Tovar (Museo Nacional de Antropología Mexico) and *Mexicanus* (BNF), and in the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca*, fols 5^r and 16^r (BNF). The reference to Aztlan is present in the codex *Mexicanus*, the Mapa de Sigüenza (Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico), and the codex *Azcatitlan, Aubin et Boturini* (Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico). See Boone, 'Mesoamerican History', p. 575; Rojo, *Return to Aztlan*.

¹² Sahagún, *Historia General de las cosas de la Nueva España*, book x, fol. 142^r.

¹³ *Codex Matritense* (in nahuatl), book VIII, fol. 192^v. Translated by Lopez Austin, *Hombre-dios*, p. 175.

¹⁴ See Lopez Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture*, p. 155. This interpretation is largely inspired by the work of Duran and Alvarado Tezozomoc, which are themselves based on a probable *Crónica X*, now lost but whose existence was conjectured by Robert Hayward Barlow before 1945. Peperstraete, *La Chronique X* and 'El cihuacoatl Tlacaelel', pp. 375–91.



Figure 2. ‘The Mexica before their Sedentarization’, detail from the *Codex Telleriano Remensis*, Paris, BNF, MS Mexicain 385, fols 27^v–28^r. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.

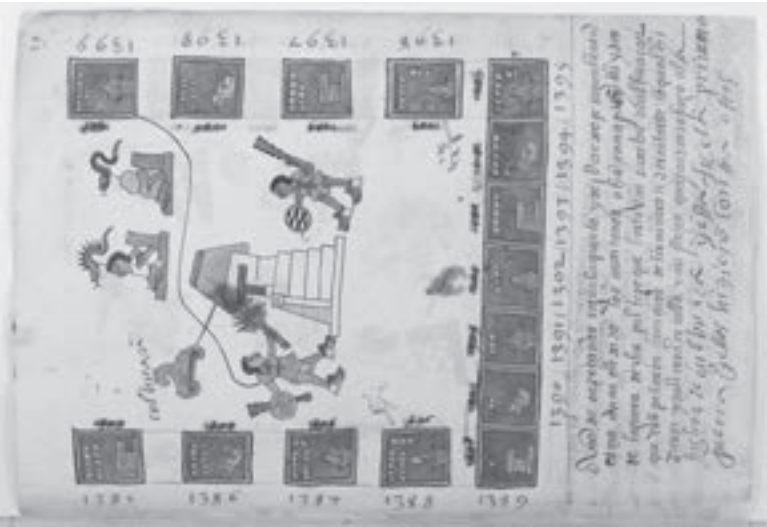


Figure 3. ‘The Mexica, Vassals of the Tepaneca, Attack the City of Colhuacan’, detail from the *Codex Telleriano Remensis*, Paris, BNF, MS Mexicain 385, fols 27^v–28^r. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.

the heir of the Toltec *Tollan*, symbolizes this transition.¹⁵ For the Mexica, the last of the Nahuas to settle in the Valley of Mexico, this process is sometimes represented in the codices by the replacement of animal skin clothing and bows and arrows, characterizing the Chichimec leaving the mythical Aztlan Chicomoztoc, with cotton clothing and the shields of civilized men (Figures 2 and 3).

The Mexica southbound progression was governed by attacks against the previous inhabitants of the areas they were crossing, including the waves of Nahuas who had preceded them. Upon their arrival in the Valley of Mexico in the thirteenth century, the Mexica settled on the western bank of Lake Texcoco, particularly at Chapultepec. At first, they were ruled by the city of Culhuacan, to which their first *tlatoani*, Acamapichtli,¹⁶ is thought to have been linked, and then under the authority of Atzacapotzalco. Prey to the hostility of the neighbouring cities — they were expelled from Chapultepec and dispersed in various cities — the Mexica had long been in a delicate and precarious position. Their implantation on an island — as well as their development of techniques for cultivating wetlands — was the result of the impossibility of establishing themselves anywhere else.

Their chronicles however, tend to efface this inglorious past, and the myth of their journey is that of an uninterrupted increase in power, both in economic terms and as powerful warriors. Their rise was completed in the mid-fifteenth century with the defeat, around 1430, of the Tepanec of Atzacapotzalco, by the coalesced forces which the Mexicas had formed with Netzahualcoyotl, king of Texcoco, and Totoquihaustli, ruler of Tlacopan (the *Triple Alliance*).¹⁷ After this defeat, all the other *altepetl* of the region were subjected and gradually became their dependants.

This myth of the origins of the Tenochca Mexica, which explains and justifies their pre-eminence among the peoples of the Valley of Mexico through the right of conquest, constitutes the backdrop against which is set the occupation of the agricultural lands. Given this, the centrality of this legend resides as much in its status as an account of the origins of the Mexica as in its role as *terminus a quo*, explaining and legitimizing all the land holdings of the region. In turn, this liminal function,

¹⁵ See Sahagún, *Historia General de las cosas de la Nueva España*, fol. 148^r.

¹⁶ Both the children and the husband of a woman of Colhuacan. See Chimalpahin, *Séptima Relación de las Diferentes Historias Originales*, p. 63; Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de Tierra firme*, II, chap. 6, p. 55; Davies, *Los Mexicas*, pp. 55–65.

¹⁷ A confederation of the *altepetl* ('city-states') of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan, founded c. 1430, after the victory on Atzacapotzalco.

this role of due reference, sustains, refreshes, and validates the myth each time it is evoked in a legal proceeding.¹⁸

More than fifty years after the arrival of the Spanish, the *Cozcatzin Codex* (1572) bears witness to the mobilization of this mythico-dynastic imagination to defend the rights of a group of landowners living in the Cohuatlan district, which was dependent on the parish of San Sebastian Atzacolco, San Juan Tenochtitlan, in the north-east of Mexico.¹⁹ The parish of San Sebastian, which consisted mainly of sparsely populated agricultural land, was on the margins of the big embankment which protected Mexico City from floods, and was adjacent to the parish of Santiago Tlatelolco. When they were dispossessed by the *gobernador don Diego* (very probably the Indian governor of San Juan Tenochtitlan, don Diego Tehuetzquiti) around 1554,²⁰ all of those with rights to the expropriated lands — probably located in the former jurisdiction of the city of Atzacapotzalco²¹ — therefore turned to don Juan Luis Cozcatzin, a dignitary who had been *alcalde ordinario* of Cohuatlan several times, in order to present a petition for the restitution of lands to the viceroy.²² Cozcatzin is the sponsor of this codex, which invokes the right of conquest as a basis for claiming the lands, of which the descendants of the first beneficiaries had been dispossessed fifteen years earlier.²³ The codex indeed bases the right of the

¹⁸ See Béliand, 'L'éviction des étrangers par le lignage, la légitimité et le mérite', pp. 49–82.

¹⁹ *Codex Cozcatzin*, BNF, Manuscrit Mexicain, 41–45. We should not confuse this district with its — sometimes — homonym of the parish of Santiago Tlatelolco, situated between Atezcapan and Acozac. For the Cohuatlan and the Coatlan de San Juan Tenochtitlan, Ana Rita Valero wrongly interprets *Coyutlan* where the scribe wrote *Cohuatlan*, phonetically close to Coatlan, as highlighted by Francisco del Paso y Troncoso. The interpretation of Valero has led other scholars (e.g., Rebeca López Mora) to make this reconciliation. See the references to Cohuatlan in *Gran Diccionario Náhuatl*: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México [Ciudad Universitaria, México D.F.]: 2012 <<http://www.gdn.unam.mx/diccionario/consultar/palabra/melahua/id/186697>>; [del Paso y Troncoso], 'Los barrios de Tenochtitlan', pp. 180–82; López Mora, 'Entre dos mundos', pp. 57–77; Valero de García Lascuráin and Tena, *Códice Cozcatzin*.

²⁰ On the identity of this governor, who operated between 1542 and 1554 (the year he died), and for criticism of other authors (e.g. Ana Rita Valero de García Lascuráin), see López Mora, 'El cacicazgo de Diego de Mendoza Austria y Moctezuma', p. 215. The fact that don Juan Luis Cozcatzin speaks of 'our governor' (that is, of the *parcialidad* de San Juan Tenochtitlan) to refer to don Diego the usurper (fol. 14^v) supports López Mora's interpretation. That governor of Tlatelolco was in office between 1562 and 1566.

²¹ Valero de García Lascuráin, *Los códices de Ixhuatepec*.

²² Megged, *Social Memory in Ancient and Colonial Mesoamerica*, p. 58.

²³ 'abra quince años poco mas o menos', *Codex Cozcatzin*, BNF, Manuscrit Mexicain, 41–45, fol. 14^v.

claimants to these lands on the granting of land to their ancestors by Itzcoatl, *tlatoani* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and conqueror of the Tepanec, to reward them for providing warriors during the first defeat of Tlatelolco in the face of the *tenochca* army in 1439.²⁴

It is in this year 1439 that our lord prince emperor Itzcohuatzin divided the land between those of Mexico who conquered this city, those who won, [our] great-grandfathers and grandfathers and ancestors whose images feature on the reverse and the list of our lands and our domains which our great-grandfathers and our ancestors and grandfathers owned and cultivated and acquired in their own right and thanks to their own work [...] that our fathers owned and won by force of arms, extending their glory to the ages to come.²⁵

In addition to the invocation of the victorious campaigns of Itzcoatl, the first *tlatoani* to liberate the Tenochca-Mexica from all vassalage, the specific references to the reformer Tlacaélel²⁶ from the beginning of the codex reconciles this document with *Crónica X*, thus inscribing this private demand for the restitution of lands in a wider narrative, that of the long road which led the Tenochca-Mexica to exercise their hegemony over all the peoples of the Valley of Mexico.²⁷

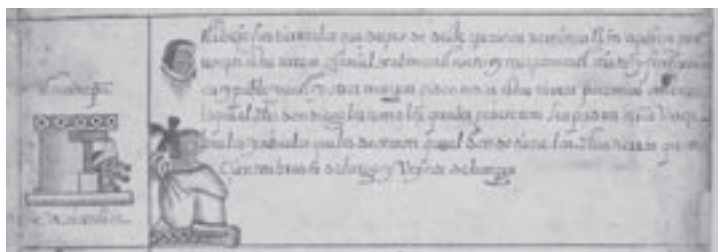


Figure 4. 'The Land of Tlatacatpan Axaiacatzin, Granted to Tlilocic', detail from the Codex Cozcatzin, Paris, BNF, Manuscrit Mexicain 41–45, fol. 3^v. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.

²⁴ The city of Tlatelolco was finally conquered in 1473 by his grandson, Axayacatl. See Allen, 'Stylistic Analysis of the Codex Cozcatzin', pp. 255–81.

²⁵ *Codex Cozcatzin*, fol. 3^r.

²⁶ *Codex Cozcatzin*, fol. 2^r.

²⁷ In fact, it is quite likely that this *Crónica X*, now lost, was used with the purpose of claiming or defending the possession of lands. See Peperstraete, 'La fonction sacerdotale au Mexique préhispanique (II)', p. 4.

It is hardly surprising then that the codex presents pictograms of the first beneficiaries of the lands conquered almost a century and a half before this request (Figure 4), followed by those of all the *tlatoani* of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, from Chimalpopoca (third *tlatoani*, from 1417 to 1427) up to the indigenous governors of Mexico in the 1550s and 1560s (Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 5. 'Chimalpopoca, Tlatoani of Tenochtitlan', detail from the Codex Cozcatzin, Paris, BNF, Manuscrit Mexicain 41–45, fol. 18^r. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.



Figure 6. 'Acolhuatzin, "King" of Atzacapotzalco', detail from the Codex Cozcatzin, Paris, BNF, Manuscrit Mexicain 41–45, fol. 18^r. Sixteenth century. Reproduced by permission of the BNF.

A hundred and thirty-three years (or the equivalent of almost six generations) thus separate the founding ancestors (identified by their image and the glyph of their name) from the claimants featuring alongside them on the list of the Cozcatzin *alcalde*. Thus, if the codex employs the terms 'great-grandson' — certainly somewhat rarely — but above all 'grandparents' and 'parents', we ought to understand these occurrences as purely generic terms which do not refer to a determinate number of generations, but to the forebears situated in a past which is too distant to precisely define their relationship with the present generations. The reference to grandfathers and to pre-Hispanic rulers thus has the double aim of emphasizing, on the one hand, the direct and uninterrupted line linking the first recipients of the *tlatelolca* booty to the whole of the *mexica* epic, while, on the other hand, attaching them to their descendants who had enjoyed legitimate and unchallenged possession of these lands for a century and a half. In so doing, the plaintiffs position themselves as legitimate heirs, as much of these land holdings as of this heroic past.

Moreover, the seats on which each of the landholders who benefited from the 1439 division of lands are represented clearly indicate that these men belonged to the *pipiltin*, the Mexica nobility, which was involved in all the battles characterizing the mythical Aztec cycle. The pride of the Mexica name, as it appears in the account

made by Duran of the second seizure of Tlatelolco in 1473,²⁸ relates in particular to these two temporalities: that of the legendary backward-looking cycle, and that of the contemporary territorial expansion which brought wealth and renown to their actors. According to the prevailing tradition, it was the assassination of Chimalpopoca — the first ruler to figure on the list of the Cozcatzin codex — by the ruler of Atzacapozalco, that is thought to have provoked the alliance of 1430 and, ultimately, the capture of Tlatelolco in 1439, and then, for the last time, in 1473. In other words, the myth of origins of the Mexica and their journey to the Valley of Mexico, explaining the right to conquer and legitimizing the temporal power of their rulers had to benefit the claimants themselves.

Exhibiting the Quality of Lineage: Cuzco, c. 1680

A famous series of sixteen paintings representing the Corpus Christi processions at Cuzco at the end of the seventeenth century²⁹ can supply us with several points for analysing phenomena which, although different, are strongly related to those we have seen in the Valley of Mexico.³⁰

The Cuzco series, originally commissioned to adorn the walls of the church in the Indian parish of Santa Ana, depicts the procession which made its way through the main roads of the town during the celebration of Corpus Christi.³¹ During

²⁸ Duran, *Historia*, vol. I, chap. 32–33.

²⁹ Corpus Christi Procession series. See the paintings and the study carried out by Luis Eduardo Wuffarden: <<http://www.unilat.org/VirtualeMuseum/Datas/Expositions/corpusChristi/indexFr.htm>>.

³⁰ On this series of paintings, see Millones, 'Las ropas del Inca', pp. 51–66; Zuidema, 'La Fiesta del Inca', pp. 191–243; Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ*.

³¹ The order of the series was the following: (1) The bishop of Cuzco, don Manuel Molinedo y Angulo exits the cathedral; (2) The Holy Communion; (3) The confraternity of the Infant Jesus of Huanca; (4) The confraternities of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter; (5) The confraternities of Saint Rose and Our Lady of 'La Linda'; (6) The parish of Saint Sebastian; (7) The parish of Saint Blaise; (8) The parish of Saint Christopher; (9) The parish of the Hospital of 'Naturales'; (10) The parish of Saint James; (11) The order of Mercy; (12) The order of the Augustinians; (13) The order of the Franciscans; (14) The order of the Dominicans; (15) The general *corregidor*, don Alonso Pérez de Guzmán; (16) The end of the procession, the return of the Holy Sacrament to the cathedral of Cuzco. See Wuffarden, *La procesion del Corpus en el Cuzco*, for the exhibition of the Union Latine in Seville; Dean, 'Cuzco's Corpus Christi Paintings', pp. 46–52.

these festivals, which come sixty days after Easter, the faithful come together in solemn adoration of the body and blood of Christ, in celebration of the real presence in the Eucharistic sacrament. On this occasion, the priest processes bearing a monstrance in the form of a sun under a canopy, at the centre of which a consecrated Host is venerated.³²

At Cuzco, all the parishes in town participated: the eight Indian parishes and the Spanish parish, as well as the religious orders and the civic dignitaries, together presenting the image of a united and reconciled urban republic.³³ As with all baroque festivals, the question of representation and precedence, exposed to the whole social body — in this case the *civitas* of Cuzco — is fundamental. The procession exhibits and confirms the social role of each of its participants, but at the same time makes clear claims to distinction and visibility, thus serving a dual function in preserving social order while asserting a more performative definition of it. If that is common to many of the early modern Catholic societies, the specificity of these paintings of the Cuzco feasts is that they allow us to contemplate, in a way which is doubtlessly more apparent than in other places, the compromises, tactics, and discourses at work in all political systems, which are by definition composed of contradictory interests and precarious balances produced by a perpetual process of negotiation. The participation in one single space and at one single moment of the civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries incarnating the Spanish-Catholic order, and the hereditary chiefs representing both the Indian parishes of the town and the Inca past, form only part of these negotiations. In fact, one must not underestimate the strong contradictions which mark each of these two sets: the deep divides which set agents of the Crown against clerics, monastics against secular clergy, craft guilds against each other; but also the Inca nobility against the ordinary people, and against different groups or individuals from the indigenous Andean classes, all trying to carve out a place for themselves in the colonial society.³⁴ The image that emerges is that of a complex world in perpetual movement, which cannot be captured by means of the reductive rhetoric which contrasts the 'Indian' and 'Hispanic' worlds. This remark is certainly not intended to minimize the power of the Hispanic domination, but to place it within a conflictual field in which it was

³² These great gatherings of believers took place between the end of May and mid-June, and coincided with the ancient local feasts of the southern hemisphere's Winter solstice, l'Inti-Raymi. de Murúa, *Historia del origen y genealogía real de los Reyes Incas del Perú*, book III, chap. 72, p. 349.

³³ Chiva Beltrán and others, *La fiesta barroca*, p. 136.

³⁴ In 'Ethnogenesis in the City', Cahill recounts the fights of the Ayamarca to be acknowledged among the native elites. See Amado Gonzales, 'El alferez real de los incas', pp. 221–29.



Figure 7. 'Chariot of the Confraternity of Saint Rosa and La Linda', from the Corpus Christi Procession series, Cuzco, Museo de arte religioso. Oil on canvas, anonymous, c. 1680. Reproduced by permission of the Museo de arte religioso (Cuzco).

only one of the multiple vectors at play. In addition to colonial exploitation, the dramatic upheavals provoked by the wars of conquest resulted indeed in a major destructuring of the Andean world.³⁵ This provoked, in particular, a slackening of the ancient rules which stipulated the commoners' obligations and duties due to the Incas, as well as the concomitant blurring of their respective statuses. The master weavers' abandonment of the old *cumbi*³⁶ factories, dedicated to the production of fabrics for the Inca elites, and the proliferation of itinerant Indians with no community (the *yanaconas*) in the Andean area, offer only a few examples of these dislocations. The procession is in this sense one of the multiple spaces of management, socialization, affirmation and emergence of all these social actors.

As displayed in the paintings, the cortège assembling the different components of the body politic processed before the rest of the population, who watched from

³⁵ Wachtel, *La Vision des vaincus*, chap. 2.

³⁶ Fabric of lama wool, finely woven and reserved for the native elites. Before the arrival of the Spanish, the workshops devoted to the making of such pieces for the Inca were mostly located around Lake Titicaca. Phipps, 'Garments and Identity in the Colonial Andes', p. 25.



Figure 8. 'Chariot of the Parish of Saint Sebastian', from the Corpus Christi Procession series, Cuzco, Museo de arte religioso. Oil on canvas, anonymous, c. 1680. Reproduced by permission of the Museo de arte religioso (Cuzco).

the roadside or from the balconies and windows of the surrounding buildings. While the impact of the sheer presence of the members of the indigenous nobility — the Incas — as a group in these processions should not be underestimated, the full rhetoric of these public exhibitions cannot be minimized, inasmuch as the order of precedence and even the iconographic programme of the figures carried by each craft guild was an important issue for the participants.

However, as this anonymous series shows, one participant in particular, the *mayordomo*, or *alférez* (standard bearer), of each confraternity, had the privilege

of processing while wearing the *llauro* (a braid of coloured threads in the form of a diadem which went round the forehead) and the *Mascapaycha* (a tassel of red and orange thread held in place by the *llauro*), and enhanced by two feathers of the korikenke bird; a headdress that had formerly been the sole prerogative of the *sapa inka*, the reigning monarch.³⁷ All the nobles of the town — who had, since the end of the sixteenth century, been part of an assembly of nobles in which sat the twelve lineages reputed to be descendants of the ancient kings of Peru³⁸ — had the task of choosing the one amongst them who would, for one year, be honoured with the title of *alférez real de los Incas*.³⁹ The twenty-four electors (two per lineage) of the *alférez real de los indios* of Cuzco were thus engaged in a bitter struggle to be chosen as the bearer of the banner of St James during the saint's feast or the Corpus Christi procession, an honour equivalent to the recognition of the chosen one as chief (*primus inter pares*) of the town's nobility. In the seventeenth century, bearing the *mascapaycha* had become a means of claiming a place in the royal lineage of the Incas, but it was also a way of demanding the respecting of all the exemptions associated with the status of *hidalgo* to which this affiliation gave the right in colonial society.⁴⁰

The other members of the colonial Inca nobility also featured prominently in the cortège, adorned with rich light-coloured fabrics (from 'Rouen', 'Flanders', and 'Cambrai'). The chief of the Inca lineage appeared to the town adorned with his rich *uncu* (tunic) in vibrantly coloured *cumbi* and headdress, whose shapes and colours conformed to a lexicon which was intelligible to a large proportion of the spectators.⁴¹ The headdress of the major-domo of the brotherhood of St James was also decorated with snakes (*amaru*), very probably a reference to his own line.⁴² If the dignitaries in dark clothes served as a frame for the light and embellished *uncu* of the *alférez real*, this was doubtless more than a simple theatrical effect. The colour

³⁷ Bradley and Cahill, *Habsburg Peru*, p. 111 and following; Dean, 'Cuzco's Corpus Christi Paintings', pp. 103, 123.

³⁸ Certificate of don Hernando de Cartagena, judge of the *naturales* de Cuzco (1598), reproduced by Uriel García, 'El alferazgo mayor de los Incas', p. 201.

³⁹ In the series, the *mayordomo* of the parish of Saint Christopher, 'd. Carlos Guainacápac ynga', is the only one to bear this title. See Wuffarden on this issue in *La procesion del Corpus en el Cuzco*.

⁴⁰ Dean, 'Cuzco's Corpus Christi Paintings', p. 103 and following.

⁴¹ Decoster, 'Identidad étnica y manipulación cultural', pp. 163–70; Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ*, p. 50 and following.

⁴² Wuffarden, *La procesion del Corpus en el Cuzco*, the chariot of Saint James.

white, which is very difficult to obtain for the *cumbis*, was formerly reserved for the Inca and the sun priests.⁴³ The message was therefore very clear, and beyond the colonial adaptation of the *uncu* of the *alférez*, with its flared sleeves and European lace, the fundamental lexicon remained. The same applies to the *tocapu* decoration embellishing the *uncu*. *Tocapu* is the name given to the set of geometric and figurative signs inscribed in the squares decorating ceremonial Inca fabrics, goblets, and vases. Although there is no consensus regarding the meaning that we need to grant them, it is highly possible that these decorations had a heraldic significance, somehow associating certain motifs with certain specific rulers (*sapa inca*) (Figure 9).⁴⁴

In other words, the *tocapu* featuring on the *uncu* of the ‘standard-bearers of the Indians’ were a way of displaying and celebrating, in the manner of an escutcheon, that they belonged to a particular lineage. This also explains the emulation between the different lineages during the election of the *alférez*. The possibility — which is very plausible — that the ancient pre-hispanic *uncus* could have been conserved by the Inca families and worn during ceremonies such as Corpus Christi, makes this reference to the legendary Incas even more convincing. The impact of this deployment does not lie solely in the profound significance which the act of donning the finery and the emblems of the Incas could have had, over 150 years after the Conquest.

Indeed, the richly woven fabrics and the vibrant colours were no longer just a means of emphasizing the social supremacy — and the wealth — of those wearing them, they were at the same time inscribed into a colonial re-reading of the mythical pre-Hispanic cycle, as much as the Inca colonial status itself (i.e. nobles of royal seed) was intimately linked to the genealogical narrative of the dynastic origin of the Incas.

According to the mythical narratives, the Inca dynasty originated with Manco Capac, founding ruler of Cuzco. At least two mythical narratives describe the origin of Cuzco and the grandeur of the Incas. One of these has Pacaritambo as its site of foundation, a place where one finds the Tambotoco mountain and its three caves (or ‘windows’) whence are supposed to have come Manco Capac and his three Ayar brothers with their sisters and wives.⁴⁵ The other narrative, a tradition which

⁴³ White llamas were rare. Herds of white llamas were kept for the Inca, and garments of *cumbi*, which were made of white llama wool, were worn by the Inca or given as an offer to the sun. See Sarmiento de Gamboa, *Historia Indica*, chap. 12; Phipps, Hecht, and Esteras Martin, *The Colonial Andes*, p. 138; Dransart, *Earth, Water, Fleece and Fabric*.

⁴⁴ Zuidema, ‘Guaman Poma and the Art of Empire’, pp. 151–202; Eeckhout and Danis, ‘Los tocapus reales en Guaman Poma, una heraldica incaica’.

⁴⁵ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Primera parte de los Comentarios Reales*, book 1, chap. 18; Sarmiento de Gamboa, *Historia Indica*, chap. 11.

the mestizo chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega heard from his own noble Inca family, described the divine birth of the couple formed by Manco Capac and his sister-wife Mama Ocllo, children of the sun god, Inti, who came into existence on the island of the sun on Lake Titicaca. Whichever version prevailed, the central protagonist remains Manco Capac, who always appears as the founder of Cuzco and of the line of the Incas.

Eleven successive generations of Incas are thought to have reigned in Cuzco before the arrival of the Spanish invaders.⁴⁶ In each generation, the dynastic line would have been broken down into lineages called royal *ayllus* or *panaca*. This is at least the way the Europeans seem to have interpreted the basis of these groupings. In the words of Bernabé Cobo (1653), each ruler founded his own lineage, his brothers and sisters remaining in the lineage of their common father. Every Inca was thus the 'head and beginning of a new family', and each of these lineages had a specific name.⁴⁷ Consequently, each royal *ayllu* had its own tradition, the descendants of each ruler being responsible for conserving the memory of their ancestor.⁴⁸ All the colonial Inca nobility of Cuzco were thus in theory attached to one of these twelve *panaca* lines.⁴⁹

The presence of this nobility was without doubt one of the principal specificities of the city. After the conquest, the Inca nobles had been expelled from the city centre, which the Spanish kept for themselves. Under the viceroy Toledo (1569–1580) and the city's *corregidor* Polo de Ondegardo (1559–1560) eight Indian parishes were organized around the Spanish parish of the Sagrario: the parishes of Santa Ana, San Cristobal, San Blas, Belen, and that of San Sebastian, situated one league (almost five km) to the south-east of the city, as a result of the reorganization of Polo de Ondegardo; also those of Santiago, the Hospital de *naturales*, later added by the viceroy Toledo, and San Jeronimo which, like San Sebastian, was founded in the *Cercado*.⁵⁰ While the different elements of the Andean world were thus to be found disseminated throughout these eight parishes, that of Santa Ana consisted of Cañari and Chachapoya Indians, while the vast majority of the Inca nobles had been relocated in the parish of San Sebastian. This restructuring of the pre-Hispanic Andean categories in the colonial city explains the attempts

⁴⁶ The number of Inca before the arrival of the Spanish varies according to the sources. If Sarmiento de Gamboa mentions twelve in 1572, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega in 1609 counts fourteen, and, in 1759, don Mariano Joaquin Carvajal y Vargas listed ten Inca from Manco Capac to Atahualpa included. See 'Compendio Limano y curioso', chap. 1.

⁴⁷ Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, tome III, book XII, chap. 4, p. 131.

⁴⁸ Rowe, 'Probanza de los Incas nietos de conquistadores', p. 199.

⁴⁹ Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, *Estructuras andinas del poder*.

⁵⁰ Cahill, 'Ethnogenesis in the City', p. 34.

by many of the non-Inca prominent people and *curacas*, whose *hidalguia* privileges the Spanish however recognized, and even by a certain number of ordinary Indians who had become rich, to become assimilated into the Inca nobility. The election of the *alférez real de los incas* by the upper circle of the twelve lineages thenceforth became significant as a categorical line of defence against all these threats.

Exhibiting and protecting the insignia of one's lineage became acts reliant on this mythico-genealogical narrative of origins which gave sense and order to the precedence of the indigenous elites. The *Chima panaca ayllu* of San Sebastian may thus have been considered the most noble because it was the most ancient, founded by the Inca Manco Capac himself.⁵¹



Figure 9. 'Coat of Arms Granted by Charles V in 1545 to the Descendants of the Inca Gonzalo Uchu Hualpa and Felipe Tupa Inga Yupanqui, Sons of Huaina Capac and Grandchildren of Tupa Inga Yupanqui (1718)'. Sevilla, Archivo General de Indias, MP-ESCU-DOS, 78. Reproduced by permission of the Archivo General de Indias.⁵²

⁵¹ Sarmiento de Gamboa, *Historia de los Incas*, chap. 14. Garcilaso de la Vega similarly states that Chima Panaca had been founded by Manco Capac in *Primera parte de los Comentarios Reales*, book IX, chap. 40. For David Cahill, the most honourable office in Cuzco was that of the twelfth house, which included the descendants of Inca Huayna Capac. Cahill, 'First among Indians', p. 153 and following.

⁵² The chequered motif (*colcapata*) of the *uncu* hereby represented evokes those of the Inca military chiefs: see Phipps, Hecht, and Esteras Martin, *The Colonial Andes*, catalogue, pp. 142–43. It could also be connected with the engraving which represents Tupa Inga Yupanqui in Guaman Poma, *Nueva Cronica*, the *tocapu* drawn by Guaman being rendered as simple squares.

Of course, the significance of the *panaca* probably underwent a considerable change between the pre-Hispanic and colonial periods.⁵³ It is therefore highly probable that the definition of the *panaca* as patrilinear group lines, as suggested by Bernabé Cobo, is a result of these changes, which made it possible for certain members of the autochthonous aristocracies to perpetuate themselves.⁵⁴ Sarmiento de Gamboa, one of the first chroniclers to provide a list of the Incas in his *Historia Indica*, lists twelve Incas before the arrival of the Castilians, a number corresponding with that of the twelve *panacas* deemed to host the nobility of Cuzco in the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ The possibility that these 'indigenous' narratives may already be the product of a first Hispanic reading of the pre-Columbian past, does not however obliterate their heuristic value. If one cannot help noticing the evangelical dimension of the number twelve, or the perfect match between the twenty-four noble electors who choose the *alférez real de los Indios nobles* in Cuzco and the dignity of *veinticuatro*, peculiar to Andalusian municipalities counting twenty-four noble aldermen, the resort to the notion of *panaca* cannot be considered gratuitous. It actually takes into account the integration by colonial society of Inca myths of origin which, even if they had been given a new significance, lost nothing of their appeal and their strength as a device for the definition of a community. On the contrary, it is through their continuing influence that they could be re-appropriated within a new context: the representations certainly underwent change, but they were also a means of preservation.⁵⁶ The fact that these arguments were comprehensible and interpretable by contemporaries is another indication that they were surely rooted in a shared rationale.⁵⁷

⁵³ The *panaca* were the administrative groups of the empire, not patrilinear lineages, according to Sherbondy in 'Panaca Lands', pp. 173–201. See also Zuidema, 'La organización religiosa del sistema de panacas y memoria en el Cuzco', pp. 19–37. For other scholars, the term *panaca* was the opposite of a patrilinear lineage because it returned to the descent of noble Inca women (*pana*) with other nobles, as opposed to the descent of the Inca and non-Inca women. See Hernández Astete, 'Las panacas y el poder en el Tahuantinsuyo', <<http://bifea.revues.org/3282>>.

⁵⁴ This mechanism probably preceded the Spanish conquest. See the clarifying article by Segalini, 'Du discours dynastique au corps social', pp. 45–75, which discusses the links between dynastic myths and the political organizations of the elites in the pre-Hispanic period.

⁵⁵ Amado Gonzales, 'El alférez real de los incas', pp. 221–29.

⁵⁶ For the same topic but in a different geographic area, see de Rojas, *Cambiar para que yo no cambie*.

⁵⁷ See the question of the rope (*tlacamecayotl*) as a means of representing the succession of generations in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican codices, which evoke the Castilian notion of 'descent in a direct line' in Olko, 'Genealogías indígenas del centro de México', pp. 147–48.

The lineage-based reading of the legendary account of the Incas and the regular public staging of the *panacas* thus established a bridge between pre-Hispanic myths and the colonial genealogical culture. In this sense, the significance accorded by the Spanish crown to the dynastic question as a legitimate base for possession of the American lands (irrespective of the rhetorical and legal importance attributed to the argument of the papal donation) contributed to the creation of a lineage-based colonial culture based on the shreds of Inca memory.⁵⁸

According to the chronicler Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, the Inca were probably used to representing the history of their lineage on painted cloths, and he contends that the Inca Pachacutec (1438–1471) commissioned one of these.⁵⁹ The significance accorded to the succession from the sun, from which the Inca stemmed according to the legend, explains why painted records had been conserved in a temple dedicated to the sun at *Poquen Cancha* (or *Puquincancha*), near Cuzco.⁶⁰ Garcilaso de la Vega asserts that the Inca nobles of Cuzco had conferred authority on him, along with don Melchor Carlos Inca and don Alonso de Mesa, all three being of Inca descent, in order to defend their interests in the court at Valladolid.⁶¹ They particularly demanded that all prerogatives incumbent to the *hidalgos* be respected, and especially the tax exemptions to which they were entitled as descendants of the ancient rulers of Peru. In support of their case, they had sent to Cordoba a piece ‘de vara y media de tafetan de la China’, on which the family tree of the Incas was painted, from Manco Capac to Huayna Capac, with their *regalia*.⁶²

Don Juan Bustamante Carlos Inca is also thought to have brought from Spain one of these painted cloths in 1747 as evidence in support of his request for an escutcheon.⁶³ It goes without saying that this claim to nobility only made sense if

⁵⁸ A similar attitude can be detected in the concern of the Council of the Indes about paying tribute to the descendants of the ‘natural lords’ of the American empires, as in the case of the descendants of Moctezuma, whose number and rights the Council sought to establish. See *Arboles genealógicos de los descendientes de Moctezuma*.

⁵⁹ Estabridis Cárdenas, *El grabado en Lima virreinal*, p. 178.

⁶⁰ de Molina, *Ritos y fabulas de los Incas*, ed. by Murra, Adorno, and Urioste, chap. 1; Zuidema, ‘The Astronomical Significance of Ritual Movements’, pp. 249–67; Julien, ‘Inca Historical Forms’, p. 621.

⁶¹ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Primera parte de los Comentarios Reales*, book IX, chap. 40. His nephew, Alonso Marquez Garcilaso, had also been granted authority in this occasion, and, in 1607, wished to be called Alonso Marquez Ynga de Figueroa. See *Información de los méritos y servicios de Pedro Márquez Galeote*.

⁶² Garcilaso de la Vega, *Primera parte de los Comentarios Reales*, book IX, chap. 40.

⁶³ Gisbert, *Iconografía y mitos indígenas*, p. 119; Cahill, ‘Una nobleza liminar’, pp. 129–62, and Cahill, ‘First among Indians’.

the account of the origins of the Inca lineages was accepted by the colonial authorities themselves. In about 1724–28, in an engraving, the priest Alonso de la Cueva, a Creole from Lima, went a step further in linking this dynastic legitimacy to a tacit donation of the empire of Atahualpa to the Castilian kings (Figure 10).⁶⁴

This *translatio imperii* takes the form of an image, which became very popular, allying the ancient representations of the Inca lineages to the dynastic succession of the Castilian kings. At the root of this visual legitimation of Empire we find the strange juxtaposition of the god of the Christians and the myth of Manco Capac and his ‘mother’ [*sic*] and wife Mama Huaco accompanied by their father the sun. This paralleling signifies and explains the dynastic succession between Incas and Hispanic kings, presided over by Christ, king of kings, surrounded by the shields of the king of Castile and that of the Inca (a puma and two snakes spitting out a rainbow).⁶⁵



Figure 10. Anonymous, ‘Efigies de los Ingas o Reyes del Peru’, Lima, Beaterio de Copacabana. Oil on canvas, c. 1750. Reproduced by permission.

⁶⁴ Gisbert, *Iconografía y mitos indígenas*, p. 128 and following.

⁶⁵ Mariazza, ‘Los incas y los reyes españoles’, p. 12. (The iconographic programme of this engraving was later copied in the work of Jorge Juan and d’Antonio de Ulloa (1748), engraved by José Palomino).

The processions of the indigenous nobility of Cuzco in Inca finery, and the use, on different surfaces, of the heraldry of the ancient royalty (the sun, the moon, and the rainbow in particular) certainly bear witness to the long persistence of the aura surrounding these illustrious origins. This prestige reveals the influence of the Inca past well beyond the circles of the nobility of Cuzco. Indeed, the mythical account of the twelve Incas, the mould into which the indigenous elites of Cuzco were poured within the colonial *panacas*, had come to be accepted as a powerful common referent, a mainstay of the local colonial imagination.

Asserting Membership?: Lima, c. 1621

The mobilization of the genealogical imagination, raw material that may be seized by different groups for any specific end, is far from being an issue which solely concerns the relations between conquerors and vanquished elites. In Peru, in the first third of the seventeenth century, a case in which the viceroy was set against a genealogist shows the degree to which, in the very interior of the 'Hispanic world', the same challenges and appropriations were in play.

In 1621, a book appeared in Lima which was entitled *The first part of the four books of the Ovandina [...] in which is discussed the nature and origin of the political nobility, and that of the very numerous and very noble houses, by listing the members of these houses who came to these kingdoms and to those of New Spain*.⁶⁶ Its author, Pedro Mexia de Ovando, a Castilian who had recently arrived in Peru, thus launched himself into a fairly common genre, that of the nobility peerages, in which he sought to trace the illustrious origin of many families established in Peru. His aim, which was stated in the title, was to show that the Castilian nobility had spread on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, thus ennobling both ends of the empire. Its publication may have passed unnoticed by the historian had it not prompted a reaction from the Lima Inquisition which was as sudden as it was violent. Indeed, two qualifiers of the Holy Office, Fray Antonio de Peñaranda and Fray Gaspar de Valdespino, spoke up against this book, citing religious and legal problems, as well as problems of truth, posed by the author's arguments. Religious, because its manner of using the Scriptures seemed dubious (in particular, they contended, how Mexia linked virtue and will in his argument); legal, because his definition of the nobility was equivalent to the vanishing of commoners; truth, because the censors considered

⁶⁶ *Primera parte de los quatro libros de la Ovandina*, published in 'Coleccion de libros y documentos referentes a la historia de América tome XVII'.

that the genealogies presented by Mexia were either fabulous or frankly deceitful. In their opinion, the fact that each of the families listed had to pay — from twenty to fifty pesos, or even more — to be included in the book only served to aggravate the situation, because Mexia appeared furthermore as a venal mystifier.

However, while it is true that Mexia did not hesitate to resort to the well-worn devices of genealogists, such as that of establishing the identity between two surnames through their phonetic proximity (as for example between the names Borgia and Gorgia, Sevilla and Hevilla, Colon and Solon), in order to prove their antiquity,⁶⁷ the response of the inquisitors seems excessive. Enjoying the support of the viceroy, even though he had initially authorized the publication of the book, the inquisitors ordered all the books in circulation to be seized and publicly burnt. We must therefore look into the book's contents to find what it was that may have led to such acrimony.

The book has a bipartite structure: the first half discusses the origins of nobility, while a second part consists of a series of genealogies of families from Lima whom Mexia often describes as being rooted in ancient noble Castilian houses. A link is thus woven between these families of the New World and the different founding myths of the Castilian nobility. On the one hand, these involve the myth of Tubal, grandson of Noah who is supposed to have peopled the Iberian Peninsula, and who is considered to be the grandfather of the Iberian peoples,⁶⁸ and, on the other hand, that of the Goth knights entrenched in the Asturias, the new beginning after the 'destruction of Spain' by Muslims. The blood of these knights ran in the veins of the heroes of the Reconquista, which had regained previously lost lands for the King of Castile. From then on, the conquistadors of the New World who, according to Mexia, were often descended from heroes of the war against the Muslims, found themselves on an equal footing with them, because, like their ancestors, they had won new kingdoms for the faith and the King of Castile. The author thus used military courage and bravery to present a particular vision of the nobility. Indeed, Mexia, not without rhetorical precautions, connects all nobility to the princely recognition of virtue, notably military virtue. The centrality of the prince also establishes service to the king as a source of nobility, completing in that way the definition of those groups able to claim such precedence.

⁶⁷ *Primera parte de la Ovandina*, book 1, chap. 31, fol. 44^r, chap. 46, fol. 97^r and following. These practices have been studied by Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*.

⁶⁸ Like Brutus for the British and Francion for the French. See Burguière, 'L'historiographie des origines de la France', pp. 41–62 and the essays by Ewa Kociszewska and Sara Trevisan in this volume.

The military achievements rewarded by the ruler, whether ancient — in the case of the Castilian Reconquista — or ‘recent’ — when it was a matter of participation (proven or supposed) in the American conquest — or again the exercise of administrative duties for the Crown, therefore makes full sense of the notion of ‘political nobility’, which features on the book’s title page. This accumulation of signs of nobility is clearly illustrated by the genealogy he proposes for the Mexia of Peru:

don Rodrigo Mexia was the sixth *lord of La Guardia*, and held in high esteem by the Catholic kings; he was with them during the *taking of the kingdom of Grenada*, where he risked his life on several occasions to win glory and renown. He married doña Maria Ponce de Leon, daughter of the *duke or marquis of Cadiz*, don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, from which union came don Rodrigo Mexia, don Pedro Ponce de Leon, father of don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, and don Pedro de Cordoba Mexia, *knight of the order of St James*, *procurator* for the Cortes in the town of Jaen, and *alguacil mayor de Corte* of this city of Lima, where he married doña Maria Peñalosa, with whom he has children⁶⁹

The explanation of the violent reaction of the inquisitors thus probably resides in the very nature of the political nobility supported by the author. This is because by repeating the myth of Tubal and that of Gothic blood, Mexia was ultimately confronted with the contradiction posed by the nobiliary imagination: either the Castilian *hidalgos* were the descendants of Tubal, or they were descended from the king Pelayo and from his Goth knights.⁷⁰ Mexia resolves this contradiction by confirming the two mythical accounts, while explaining their simultaneity by the primacy of service to the prince as a source of all nobility. According to him, the descendants of each of these thus constituted the mainstay of the Castilian nobility.

In order to demonstrate his proposition, he separates in the architecture of the book the *infanzones* from the rest of the nobility. He defines the former as being children of the Goth kings at the time when royalty was elective, while the

⁶⁹ *Primera parte de la Ovandina*, book I, chap. 47. My italics.

⁷⁰ This contradiction is highlighted by a contemporary, friar Benito de Peñaloza, in a work entitled *Libro de las cinco excelencias del Español*, published in Pamplona in 1629. His ‘fourth excellence’ states: ‘En los Españoles se halla la mayor antigüedad de nobleza, que ay en las demas naciones, conservando siempre la sangre de su primer progenitor Tubal’ (fol. 73^v). It is easy to understand that Peñaloza opposes the Gothic obsession so dear to the great nobles, suggesting instead that of a native nobility from the Iberian Peninsula. This excellence is also similar to Chapter 34 of the *Ovandina*, entitled *De como son nuestros Españoles los Caballeros mas nobles y principales del mundo*.

latter could trace their origin back to the exercise of dignities and offices — terms which the author treats as synonymous. Chapters 21 to 29 of the first book include a more precise discussion about the origin of the ‘dignities and offices’ of Admiral, duke and marquis and so on, a list which ends with the dignity or office of *regidor* (alderman): noble titles, juridical and military responsibilities were thus all reduced to the same level.

This indexing, which culminates in Chapter 30 on the obedience to the Crown demanded of all dignitaries, is completed (Chapters 38 and 39) by two assertions which constitute the cornerstone of his rationale. The first maintains that, at first (in a past which is not stated), the nobility of the Spanish flatlands was by far the greatest in number (and particularly the nobilities of Andalusia and of Estremadura, whence came many of the settler families of Peru),⁷¹ a premise which clearly diverges from the vulgate on the origins of the Castilian nobility, which made the mountains of the north of the peninsula the cradle of Spanish nobility.⁷² It was only the passage of time and the vicissitudes of fortune which had sent so many of those flatlands families into oblivion: lineages, he wrote, are like the buckets of a *noria*, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending, as the wheel turns.⁷³ In this way, Mexia disrupted a significant part of the genealogical culture of the nobility, and in the process demonstrated the usefulness of a book like his own, because it was thanks to genealogy that such ‘forgotten’ lineages could once again see the light of day.

The second assertion proclaimed that the nobility took the bearing of arms as its starting point, because arms revealed the courage and valour of men, virtues which men needed to carry on exercising on pain of ‘losing honour and reputation’. Thanks to these two arguments, Mexia authorized new groups to claim both the recognition of their own nobility and the right to genealogies usually reserved for the great houses.

Logically, by making personal merit the source of all nobility, this rhetoric could certainly have denied the legitimacy of genealogy itself.⁷⁴ In fact, it means no such thing because if for him personal virtue and courage merited the gratitude of the prince, in time, successive generations of virtuous men in a lineage only served to increase its brilliance. There was consequently no contradiction in playing out the

⁷¹ *Primera parte de la Ovandina*, fol. 74^r and following.

⁷² See Saez, ‘Hidalguía’, pp. 23–45.

⁷³ *Primera parte de la Ovandina*, chap. 38, fols 76^v–77^r. This same metaphor allowed him to explain that the houses founded by the *indianos* were now equal to the ancient Castilian houses.

⁷⁴ Like Erasmus, who saw nothing Christian in the concept of innate nobility and their taste for blazons. See Erasmus, *Manuel du soldat chrétien*, pp. 209–12.

lineages which went back a thousand years or more, back to the time of Tubal or of the Goths, while also praising the military glory of the conquistadors eighty years earlier, because the accounts resulted from the same principle of legitimacy, that of royal sanction.

For all that, the assertion was no less audacious: Mexia was not only advocating political nobility but, without saying it openly, was ultimately asserting that *all nobility was political* because only the king had the power to decide. We can therefore easily see the fury which must have seized the circles close to the viceroy on the publication of Mexia's book, they being so proud of their noble bloodlines which they traced back to time immemorial. The counterattack took therefore place in the territory of honour, challenging the true catholicity of the lineages cited in the book: if Mexia's arguments were considered ridiculous or scandalous, the families included in his nobility catalogue were themselves accused of being of 'impure blood'.⁷⁵ This accusation presented the advantage of authorizing the Lima Inquisition to take the matter in hand.

The allegations concerning this supposed impurity were, like the immemorial nobility, based on reputation and on the narratives spread locally about specific surnames. According to these rumours, the origins of certain families of Lima dignitaries went back to people condemned by the Inquisition over seven generations earlier, during the *autos-da-fé* of Séville, particularly in 1481.⁷⁶

The book's detractors consequently countered Mexia's praising of personal merit by invoking the everlasting opprobrium which fell on those considered to be descended from 'heretics': two myths of origin therefore came face to face — that of the pure blood of Tubal and the Goths, and that of the contaminated blood of Jews, Muslims, and other heretics. These were, all in all, two usages based on the same imagination, that of the transmission from generation to generation of virtues and flaws, used for opposing ends, and understandable — and justifiable — only *in situ*.

It is indeed as a confrontation between two readings of the same principles that this affair is apprehended soon after by the Madrid qualifiers of the *Suprema* — to whom this affair had to be presented. The distance between Madrid and Lima, and the authorized change of perspective, is probably what explains the attitude of the qualifiers who thought that the publication of this book did not call for the

⁷⁵ That is, belonging to the lineages stained by their descent from Jews or Muslims who had converted to Catholicism, or from people who had been condemned by the Inquisition. See Zuniga, *Espagnols d'outre-mer*, chap. 6.

⁷⁶ Rodriguez Moñino, 'Pedro Mexia de Ovando', pp. 230–56.

intervention of the Inquisition: if the definition of virtue (and therefore of the nobility) that Mexia had proposed did not correspond to that put forth by the theologians, it was important not to be offended by it because, 'given that he had not studied books on philosophy or theology, but rather those of chivalry, he defined virtue from a knightly perspective'.⁷⁷

In a position which can certainly appear partisan⁷⁸ in the Castile of the first third of the seventeenth century, marked by inquests into purity of blood, the qualifiers even asserted that the question of pure or impure lineages was essentially a matter of reputation against which books, whether true or false, carried hardly any weight; they moreover added that in their eyes there was nothing reprehensible about wanting everyone to be noble, because, other than the healthy rivalry which could spring among the Spanish of Peru, 'all nobility needed to begin somewhere'.⁷⁹

But the interest of this affair also resides in the fact that it permits us to witness the outlining of a collective actor, which was initially formed by the aggregation of the individualities who wanted to have their genealogy featured in this peerage, and then crystallized as a group by means of the diatribes launched against them. This group, which was mostly the result of the maelstrom of the conquest, was composed of families that had acquired capital and notoriety in the Indies, and who considered that, more than eighty years (or almost four generations) after the conquest, their ancestors could quite reasonably be considered heads of lineage. All the same, the fact that their 'myth of origins' was too close in time to them pushed them to add to this recent foundation — the source of their present wealth — the prestige of a more significant temporal layer. The '*noría*' of the lineages, dear to Mexia, gave them the means of thinking of their recent history as that of a latent or dormant ancient nobility, which the wars of conquest had revealed. As a result, they wanted to add the brilliance of the centuries to their new fortune, by paying Mexia to craft their new family mythology.

Conclusion

One land claim, one assertion of personal rank and one attempt at aggregating the nobility together comprise the heterogeneous matter of this contribution.

⁷⁷ 'como no habia estudiado en libros de Filosofia y Teologia, sino en los de Caballeria, definio la virtud a su modo de caballería'. Rodríguez Moñino, 'Pedro Mexia de Ovando', p. 247.

⁷⁸ Sicroff, *Les controverses des statuts de pureté de sang*.

⁷⁹ Rodríguez Moñino, 'Pedro Mexia de Ovando', p. 248.

However, despite the disparity between these examples, their central arguments are very similar, in that the question of origin becomes the source from which legitimacy emanates. The Chichimec, Incas, Tubal, and the Goths are thus the great mythical ancestors which they each invoke to simultaneously explain right, precedence, and quality. The fact that these different narratives of origins were also those of territorial conquests only serves to emphasize the convergences between various discursive legitimating strategies originally rooted in distinct cultural universes.

In these three cases, in fact, the legendary account traces the rise of groups of varying degrees of obscurity, who are called to become dominant through the conquest of a territory. Such is the case of the Tenochca-Mexica, whose past as conquerors was still vivid enough at the end of the sixteenth century to justify the possession of lands. It is also the case for the Ayar brothers, founders of Cuzco and then conquerors of all that would become the Tahuantinsuyu. Finally, it is clearly the case with the Spanish elites, who saw themselves, whether it was true or not, as descendants of the caste of the conquistadors of the American lands for the King of Castile, in a revitalization of the still effective theme of the Reconquista as a source of the Castilian nobility.

The possible parallels or the capacity for dialogue between these different vocabularies of honour is far from being a mere historian's view, because even the contemporaries regarded the analogy between the different usages of genealogy by different peoples, as a proof of its universal and therefore legitimate character. When Mexia de Ovando explains what an *infanzon* is, for example, he quite naturally sees its equivalent in the Catalan 'hombres de paraje', the French barons, or in the *panacas* of the Peruvian Incas.⁸⁰ Now, the existence of these convergences between several idioms or languages that enables to assert legitimacy through the myth of origins surely establishes the possibility of a field of shared referents. Reinterpreted and resignified by the specific context and by the position of the different actors within each colonial society, these mythico-genealogical referents ultimately enabled the development of a rhetorical repertoire from which everyone could draw. The myths of origins and the related genealogical narratives thus led to the emergence of a kind of middle ground, a common ground made up of mistakes, misunderstandings, and misappropriations, most often a space of confrontation rather than a meeting space, but within which the individual and collective actors could negotiate.

⁸⁰ *Primera parte de la Ovandina*, book 1, chap. 14. Mexia often invokes the example of the Inca customs in order to explain or justify a custom, such as in Chapter 41 on noble arms and blazons, illustrated by the example of the rainbow and the *llaautos* (or the *mascapaycha*), reserved to the Inca, or in Chapter 42, which makes idleness the source of all vices as shown by the education and customs of all young Inca princes.

The mobilization of these arguments in legal processes, the other common ingredient of the cited examples, proves moreover the contextual efficacy of the mythico-genealogical rhetoric. This narrative certainly allowed individuals and groups to identify with an ancestral tutelary figure that defined them. But it also fostered, in the very process of the defence of rights and prerogatives, the emergence and crystallization of self-aware groups, rather than the sum of the individual claimants. This is very clearly the case with the families of Lima who paid Mexia de Ovando, and who appear as a group by means of the legal case against the book which had gathered them together and thus brought them unity. The same applies to the collective of the expropriated Mexicans, who are enthroned as 'descendants of the landholders of 1439', due to the usurping of their lands and to the case which followed. From being Mexica's *pipiltin*, they became the last offspring of a warrior line.

This catalysing function is crucial, especially in the conquest societies, because it supports different identity constructions. 'Whether they are real or mythical, genealogies simultaneously reveal the structures of populations, their origin, their relationship with the environment and the process of construction or deconstruction of the identity of those populations'.⁸¹ Indeed, the claim to mythical ancestors has a very significant performative power because it leads, from a shared conviction, to the creation of the groups who thenceforth express themselves with this imagination and who can act as such. To claim an ancestor is to trace a demarcation line between those who have no claim to the same strain and all of those who, through this process, become interdependent fellow creatures. In the case of the Indian elites, the mythical narrative allows the affirmation of the immemorial antiquity of indigenous nobilities, one of the primary values of the notion of nobility, while also distinguishing themselves from the plebeians. In a context in which the term *Indian* epitomized a clearly pejorative value,⁸² in which pauperization and cultural marginalization diminished the former complexity and richness of the indigenous societies in the face of a generic *Indio*, necessarily poor, perforce soon to be a peasant, the Indian elites had nothing to lose and everything to gain when they differentiated themselves through such genealogical arguments.

Finally, the high value accorded to the temporal depth of the legitimate enjoyment of an asset or a prerogative is certainly another point which the three cases discussed here have in common. Indeed, while uncontested enjoyment over a long period is presented as evidence by the dispossessed owners of Cohuatlan, the

⁸¹ Gibert and others, 'Apport des généalogies réelles et mythiques', pp. 199–207.

⁸² On the pejorative meaning of the word *indio* in the mid-seventeenth century, see Cobo, *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, III, chap. 2, p. 13.

mythical genealogies themselves by definition play on the very notion of antiquity. Is it not the distance in time itself which conveys these genealogies prestige and mythical character, and which renders futile any attempt at verification through positive proof?⁸³ There is a tacit agreement between don Juan Luis Cozcatzin, the chiefs of the Inca *panaca*, and don Pedro de Mexia on this question: it is the immemorial antiquity of a people or a lineage that justifies its lawful right and confers value and supremacy to it. At the very least, this is what appears to constitute the language needed to express the very idea of social superiority.

However, if antiquity so strongly connects the notion of social supremacy to the length of historical time, the mythical past also allows for expressing the value of 'personal virtue' (that of the founding ancestor), a notion in fraught tension with that of heredity by 'blood'. The example of the treaties on nobility and the Histories produced in the seventeenth century in Peru (and in Chile)⁸⁴ show how, within one Hispanic cultural world, the different actors seized on a genealogical rhetoric, which drew heavily on Gothic mythic origins and on the wars which led to the 'reconquering' of the peninsula, to reinforce, paradoxically, the importance of personal merit when faced with the all-powerful strictly hereditary argument advocated by others.

There is not, then, any unity and overall consistency in what appears to be a tactical use of the arguments destined above all to defend, assert, or lay claim. One should therefore be careful not to interpret this apparent convergence of the mythico-genealogical argument as a type of unity of meaning across cultural and social differences. As a language of translation and of intercultural creation, the mythical referent thus acts as a possible tool for social dialogue, decried by some and defended by others, but acting to reduce to common terms, to one alphabet, the means of defining the quality of men. The use of this common language allowed arguments which were sometimes opposed to be at least heard — if not accepted — by everyone.⁸⁵ This is because, as a language, genealogy is primarily a means, which consequently serves to express *hic and nunc* the will and intentions of those who use it. It does not in itself constitute a coherent and unified doctrinaire corpus. This fundamental difference between the repertoires of references or codes

⁸³ The idea itself is not typical of a colonial or Hispanic context, and reveals a 'European' conception which sixteenth-century Spanish authors based on Roman antiquity. Pérez, 'Réflexions sur l'*hidalguia*', p. 15.

⁸⁴ On the different interpretative levels of the histories of the provinces of Spanish America, and the role of the 'founders of a lineage' in the *Historica Relacion del Reyno de Chile* (1646) written by the Jesuit Alonso de Ovalle, see Zuniga, *Espagnols d'outre-mer*, p. 159 and following.

⁸⁵ On this subject see Cusumano, 'Fabriquer un culte ethnique', pp. 167–84.

of expression and an integrated and coherent mechanism, a sort of world vision, is fundamental because, in return, it allows us to think about other related issues.

If we consider the genealogical rationale to be a form of logic, a principle of proof, this leads to an enlightened reading of the arguments advanced by the actors in different situations and contexts, and must necessarily force us to proceed with caution in terms of their interpretation.

This is particularly true in the colonial environment, in which the greater visibility of the violence in social relations very often leads to a binary reading of the mechanisms of domination. The societies of Spanish America are habitually described as societies of conquest governed by a 'caste system' that ranked individuals in terms of their pedigree.⁸⁶ These 'castes' (stems) were precisely linked to the notion of origins and lineage, and the different gradations which were supposed to serve as an indicator of everyone's place in the social organization, were defined in terms of the greater or lesser number of African, indigenous, or European ancestors.⁸⁷ This particular use of genealogy, and the concomitant essentializing of its supposed cradle of origin, in the way of the mythical Chicomoztoc, must be reconsidered according to the phenomena which the three cases described here bring to light.

In fact, the notion of caste, commonly mobilized by contemporaries, gives us very little help in understanding the distinctive strategies deployed by the *pipiltin* of Cohuatlan, by the Incas of Cuzco, or by the urban patricians of Lima, although these strategies were also based on the metaphysics of lineage and blood. This simple observation should encourage us to perceive *casta*, just like the myths of origin, as an additional way of expressing belonging or rightfulness, and not as an unequivocal principle governing the social order.

⁸⁶ The phrase 'systema des castas' is thus currently employed by anthropologists, art historians, and even historians interested in this subject. See for instance Cañizares, 'New World, New Stars', pp. 33–68; Katzew, *Casta Painting*, especially chap. 2; Martínez, 'The Black Blood of New Spain', pp. 479–520; Voss, 'From Casta to California', pp. 461–74; Mazzolini, 'Las Castas', pp. 349–73.

⁸⁷ Zuniga, 'Muchos negros, mulatos y otros colores', pp. 45–76.

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IN SEARCH OF ANCESTORS: THE FAMILY GENEALOGISTS OF FLORENCE (FOURTEENTH–FIFTEENTH CENTURY)

Christiane Klapisch-Zuber

After the first half of the fourteenth century, when the hierarchy of the Florentine aristocracy had been established, the family chroniclers of the merchant class attempted to find their rightful place within that class by styling long and copious pedigrees. The genealogical practice of these ‘merchant-authors’, experienced in the practice of writing and careful to justify their access to the government of the city, should however be distinguished from that of families who could boast feudal origins yet rarely cared to retrieve or preserve any written memory and documents. The scope of this contribution is to compare the conceptualization of ‘genealogical memory’ in the merchant class and the more ancient feudal or urban families.

Some Florentine chroniclers tried to classify the different types of aristocratic families. In his *Chronicle*, of which the final version was composed between 1333 and his death, Giovanni Villani (1275–1348) lists the most prominent families in early eleventh-century Florence, in the era of Emperor Otto I.¹ He identifies a good fifty or so families, including fifteen who, by his own time, were extinct or had been reduced to ‘nothing’, and four who could no longer be called ‘great’ because they had been reintegrated into the *Popolo* who ran the city. Of the other families,

¹ Essay translated by Amanda J. Haste, Ph.D. Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book v, chap. 10–13, I, pp. 179–83.

Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, École des hautes études en sciences sociales

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which he qualifies as ‘powerful’ or ‘great’, he considers that a dozen represent ‘old’ or ‘very old’ inhabitants of the city, and states that two of these — the Lamberti family, now extinct, and the Uberti family — were originally from Germany. He had also previously noted that Uberto and Lamberto were ‘barons’ of Otto I who remained in Tuscany after the Emperor had returned to Germany.² As for the rest of the lineages he cites, Villani does not recall any particular origin: all that sets them apart from the other inhabitants of the city is their antiquity — the length of their presence in Florence — and, for some, the chivalric dignity conferred on them along with the coats of arms which were bestowed on them by the imperial vicar, Marquis Ugo.³

It should be noted, however, that in referring to a period well before the eleventh century, Villani is also reiterating the legendary traditions about the genuinely ancient origins of a family such as the Uberti. He reports, albeit somewhat half-heartedly, having read ‘somewhere’ that the lineage may come from an orphaned son of Catilina, ‘Uberto Cesare’, who under the patronage of Julius Caesar is thought to have been a long-time lord of the city, a function which many of his descendants probably subsequently exercised; it is perhaps from the latter that ‘great lords and great lineages of Florence’ would have emerged.⁴ These would thus lay claim to an ancestor as powerful as he was fabulous, although Villani does not specify who this could have been. Dante, however, celebrating the women of the good old days, evokes the one who ‘traendo a la rocca la chioma | favoleggiava con la sua famiglia | d’i Troiani, di Fiesole e di Roma’ (‘drawing the strands from the distaff, | told with her household tales of the Trojans, | of Fiesole, and of Rome’),⁵ a narrative background which could be populated with the ancestors of the current inhabitants.

It is in the oldest part of the city that the *schiatte antiche* or *antichissime*, the ancient or very ancient lineages mentioned by Villani, are concentrated. But as other towns were conquered and more and more people from the *contado* came to live in Florence, the city walls were enlarged to accommodate a new area. The chronicler tells us that this second enclosure was started in 1078, in the time of

² Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book v, chap. 1, I, p. 161. He also mentions the story according to which the earls of the Guidi family were descended from some German ‘grandi baroni’ who had arrived in Italy at the time of Otto I. Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book VI, chap. 37, I, p. 264.

³ Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book v, chap. 2, I, p. 164: among them are the Gian-donati, Pulci, Nerli, the earls of Gangalandi, and the della Bella.

⁴ Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book II, chap. 4, I, p. 67.

⁵ Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. and ed. by Durling, canto xv, ll. 124–26.

Emperor Henri III. The new arrivals settled in these new districts, and included country gentry such as the Buondelmonti, following the destruction of their castle at Montebuoni;⁶ the inhabitants of Fiesole, whose town was destroyed by the Florentines in 1125; and the ancestors of the Velluti and the Pitti, who, as we will see later, were dispersed into these extensions of Florence at the beginning of the thirteenth century. And, as the flow of immigrants did not cease, between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries it became necessary to begin work on a third sector, incorporating an even greater part of the Oltrarno and the large peripheral areas to the north of the river, in order to accommodate this *gente nuova*.

Villani's list closely follows the account of the forty-odd families, whether ancient or more recent, whose names Dante puts in the mouth of Cacciaguida, his great-great-grandfather (*Paradise*, Canto XVI). Even though the chronicler does not stigmatize the emerging families — which include his own — as Dante did, and even if he distributes his fifty-odd *schiatte* between the districts of the old city, it is noticeable that he still observes the order stated by the poet. Villani's nephew Filippo Villani, who continued in his footsteps, would go on to corroborate the poet's genealogy, among whom his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida had mentioned his brother Eliseo, identified by Boccaccio as descending from a Roman who restored the city.⁷

Whether they come from the poet or from the chronicler, or from even further back,⁸ the litanies of names must have been anchored firmly enough in the memories of the Florentines to feed their genealogical fantasies. These include those of Giovanni di Filippo Cavalcanti (1381–c. 1451), who was from a great lineage in the city, which still held various *castelli* in the *contado*. He himself was an impoverished, debt-ridden member of the Cavalcanti who, between 1430 and 1440, spent long periods in the prison of the *Stinche*, somewhat ironically named after a castle which had belonged to the Cavalcanti and was torn down by the Florentines in 1304. Between 1440 and 1447, he drafted his *Nuova opera*, which the editor of the French translation subtitled 'A (critical) page in Florentine life'.⁹ This chronicle, which attempted to tackle the injustices and betrayals which were a standard

⁶ Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, ed. by Porta, book v, chap. 36, I, pp. 221–22.

⁷ See Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, pp. 184–87; French translation: Bizzocchi, *Généalogies fabuleuses*, pp. 180–82.

⁸ See Malespini, *Storia fiorentina di Ricordano Malispini [sic]*, ed. and annotated by Follini.

⁹ Cavalcanti, *Istorie fiorentine*, II; Cavalcanti, *Nuova opera*, ed. by Monti, p. 1.

part of political life, is full of sanctimonious advice addressed to its future readers.¹⁰ It is an uneven work, which gives pride of place to the origins of the Florentine nobles and in particular to those of the Cavalcanti line. He develops them less in his other work, the *Trattato politico-morale*, written between 1445 and 1450.¹¹ In this *Trattato*, Cavalcanti divides into five categories the noble lineages of Florence, thirty-five clans who either owned land in the *contado* or were resident in the city. After the 'knights of Sylla' come the nobles 'who accompanied Theodoric, Prince of the Goths', followed by the 'noble companions of a German lord who came with Charles Martel', then the nobles from particular Italian regions, and finally the nobles from neighbouring towns or whom the Republic had honoured with a noble title because of their virtues.¹² It is in the third category, that of the companions of Charles Martel in the eighth century, that Giovanni places his distant ancestors, four brothers who made the journey from Cologne to Italy.¹³ The categories differ slightly in the *Nuova opera*, but here the Cavalcanti are well and truly defined as immigrants 'from across the Alps' who arrived in Italy after the expulsion of the Goths.¹⁴ By dint of a chronological leap straddling no less than six centuries, our author finds, in the consular Florence of the twelfth century, the Cavalcanti of Montecalvi. These are the descendants of one of the four brothers, the three others being respectively the originators of the lineages of Pescia (which he designates as the six branches of the 'other' Cavalcanti), of Siena (where they are known under the name of Orlandi Malavolti), and of Orvieto (the Monaldeschi).

If Giovanni cannot flesh out these four founders, and if none of them can therefore be the hero, eponymous or otherwise, of a lineage, it is clear that, in connecting them to a gallant Carolingian knight, he enhances the nobility of the family while distinguishing it from the *cattani* of the *contado* — these quarrelsome minor nobles descended from 'barbarian' Goths who were despised by the good citizens of Florence — or even from the German warriors who had arrived more recently in the wake of an Ottonian or Swabian emperor.

¹⁰ For instance, 'aggiugnendo amaestramenti alle future genti' ('adding advice for future generations', Cavalcanti, *Nuova opera*, ed. by Monti, p. 3), and 'm'è huopo ridurre alla memoria de' futuri disutili e abominevoli accidenti, acciò ch'è futuri ne piglino essempro' ('I must consign to memory some further useless and terrible episodes, so that they may set an example for future generations', *Nuova opera*, ed. by Monti, p. 5).

¹¹ Cavalcanti, *The 'Trattato politico-morale'*, ed. by Grendler.

¹² *The 'Trattato politico-morale'*, ed. by Grendler, pp. 102–09.

¹³ *The 'Trattato politico-morale'*, ed. by Grendler, pp. 105–07.

¹⁴ Cavalcanti, *Nuova opera*, ed. by Monti, pp. 23–26.

There was therefore a pool of legends in existence in Florence which could feed the claims to antiquity in the families of the urban aristocracy towards the end of the Middle Ages. However, it is astonishing to note how little these mythical stories resonate in the genealogies of the same epoch, even in those by members of the most ancient local aristocracy. Indeed only exceptionally did they dare connect themselves with any particular mythical foreign implantation. Should we attribute their reluctance to shyness or, rather, to a desire to distantiate themselves from the genealogical self-consciousness of the feudal aristocracy? Indeed, we need to distinguish between those who could boast of feudal origins but were not inclined to written memory or archival keeping, the 'merchant-authors', experienced in the practice of writing and careful to justify their access to the government of the city.

*The Basis of Aristocratic Genealogical Awareness:
Lands, Manors, and Urban Houses*

One representative of the old feudal aristocracy is the lawyer Messire Lapo di Lapo d'Albertuccio da Castiglionchio, an influential citizen in the Florentine community just before the revolt of the Ciompi (1378). His *Epistola o sia ragionamento* is famous for its discussion of the criteria of nobility. The text, written in 1376, was recently re-edited a long time after it was first published, in a rather faulty form, in the eighteenth century.¹⁵ Lapo is writing for his son and wants to provide his explanation of the triple quality of the da Castiglionchio family as nobles, good Guelphs, and members of the Popolo (*popolani*), because another branch of the original lineage of the da Cuona lords (a title which his own branch had kept for a long time) known as da Volognano, were Ghibelline liars; they had been included in the list of the magnates since the end of the thirteenth century, with their political and legal rights reduced and strictly controlled. Lapo is consequently compelled to re-read the history of his lineage, the seigneuries, and the rights held in the upper Arno, and, in order to ascertain a genealogical pattern, to list some ninety-five members of his branch, living and dead.¹⁶ In this genealogy, he not only goes back through

¹⁵ Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola al figlio Bernardo*, ed. by Panerai, pp. 323–445; Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola o sia ragionamento di Lapo da Castiglionchio*, ed. by Mehus.

¹⁶ Klapisch-Zuber, 'Un noble florentin à ses crayons'. The drawing of the apocryphal manuscript is reproduced (p. 130) and explained with the help of a diagram (pp. 128–29), which the editor of the tract, Serena Panerai, has reproduced (p. 332) and briefly summarized in *Antica possessione con belli costumi*, pp. 446–47.

the preceding six generational steps, but also includes his own generation as well as the two subsequent ones. According to a great-great-great-uncle who had a long life and whom Lapo had known in his youth, when the da Cuona — later named da Castiglionchio after acquiring this castle in 1204 — settled in the town, they received some houses near a gate of the second enclosure and had the key to it; that gate kept the name of one of theirs, Messire Ruggieri da Cuona, until its destruction between the end of the thirteenth and the first third of the fourteenth century, when the third enclosure was built.¹⁷

Castles, rights, and houses are prominent in Lapo's *Epistola*, as are the entanglements of his Guelph branch with the Ghibelline branch; Lapo, however, does not extract any records of exceptional ancestors from these narratives. The attention he pays to the ancestors themselves is almost wholly summarized in the genealogy: they did in fact live far more on their own lands than in the city, and left very few written documents. Undoubtedly Lapo evokes some names of forefathers who were involved in the battles between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and in a vendetta, but it is only in the case of his great-uncle that he gives details of stature and character, and then of his own father because they were both priors, that is, members of the Seigneury.¹⁸ Thus he never lets his imagination run away with him in painting a portrait of ancestors lost in the mists of time, and of whom all we know is their name. It is nevertheless remarkable that he can create a series of six ancestors' names: as he says haughtily, 'molti cittadini sono che non potrebbero dare a lloro figliuoli informatione sì antica di loro progenitori' ('many citizens could not give their sons such ancient information on their ancestors').¹⁹

If we are to focus on the ancient aristocratic families of the city, contemporaneous with this first example of feudal memory, it is worth examining a text less well known than that of Lapo but which, in its own way, reveals the foundations on which the awareness of the past of a lineage rest. The *Memorie*, written in 1376 by an anonymous member of the old urban Tornaquinci family, at the same time as Lapo da Castiglionchio was writing his *Epistola*, is completely dedicated to what

¹⁷ Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola al figlio Bernardo*, ed. by Panerai, pp. 368–70.

¹⁸ Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola al figlio Bernardo*, ed. by Panerai, p. 377.

¹⁹ 'e non ti debbi maravigliare se di più adrieto non truovo memoria però che non è in costume in queste parti di fare di ciò sì lunga and continua memoria e molti cittadini sono che non potrebbero dare a lloro figliuoli informatione sì antica di loro progenitori' ('and you should not be surprised if I cannot find any earlier evidence, as it is unusual in these places to retain a long and continuous memory of the past, and many citizens could not give their sons such ancient information on their ancestors'). Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola al figlio Bernardo*, ed. by Panerai, p. 373.

he has been able to gather, from written and oral sources, on the history of his family.²⁰ And that is not very much, because while this family dates back to the consular age of the twelfth century, and is classified with ‘the greats and the magnates’ of the city at the end of the thirteenth century, its author knows or reports almost nothing before the beginning of the fourteenth century. All that emerges from this opaque period is the name of the common ancestor, Tornaquinci d’Alberto di Tornaquinci, who lived in the twelfth century and gave his name to a tower on the first Florentine enclosure, Dante’s ‘cerchia antica’.

This anonymous author begins his genealogy with the grandson, Tornaquinci d’Alberto, of the supposed founder of this urban lineage, and traces it up to his own epoch. However, all he knows of his thirteenth-century ancestors is that they were chased out by the return of the Ghibellines in 1260, and that some of them emigrated to France, where they lived under the name of Tornamini and bore the same arms as the Tornaquinci. For the anonymous author, as it would be for Pitti and even Cellini, as we will see, this was clear proof of a common ancestry. Nonetheless, for the fourteenth century the *Memorie Tornaquinci* do not present short biographies of the ancestor’s descendants, but rather concentrate on the houses and city towers in order to follow their divisions and transmission. It is therefore not so much a human genealogy but a cadastral genealogy which follows the distribution of the spaces occupied by the Tornaquinci until the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Their milestones are the divisions and attributions of lots between consorts which took place in 1286 and 1304, and the memoir settles for giving the names of the allottees two or three generations before its author, followed by those of his contemporaries who still live on these lots. A genealogical diagram of one of the main branches follows the text in the late fifteenth-century copy raised by a descendant — probably because they belonged to this branch and failed to recopy the other signed drawings (which have since disappeared) of the anonymous author.

What can we gain from this document? More than anything else, it demonstrates the importance of implantation in the city. Even if it says nothing about an urban origin and only evokes by implication the Guelph affiliations of the lineage, and even if it fails to paint a portrait of a single ancestor, being only slightly interested in the communal honours to which any of them might have been able to aspire, it does insist on urban roots, in an era when these magnates would begin to recover the status of *popolani* and/or their different branches would become autonomous

²⁰ See Klapisch-Zuber, ‘Les doubles fonds de la *consorteria* florentine’, pp. 381–410. It also contains an edition of the *Memorie Tornaquinci* from the MS 1885, fols 1–6.

under different names.²¹ The *Memorie* appears to foresee these segmentations, of which the author only knows and reports the first, which dates back to 1364. And maybe it is to counter these that he is forced to recall the territorial cohesion of the Tornaquinci. The fact remains, however, that while Lapo da Castiglionchio listed the lands and the men who had depended on his family, the anonymous author, a skilled city-dweller, sees in the insertion of his relations in the urban fabric the clearest evidence that they belong to the local aristocracy. Here the character and prestige of the actual protagonists in these acts of allotments count for less than the moves of generations and brothers on the chessboard of these possessions.

The Eponymous Ancestor of the Merchant Aristocracy

Is the ignorance of their ancestors which Lapo da Castiglionchio attributes to 'many citizens' really justified? Let us seek to verify this by referring to genealogies developed within the families which gained political responsibility in Lapo's era.

One of the oldest edited family records with a commentary is that of Donato Velluti (1313–1370) who, in 1367, began a book christened 'Cronica domestica' by its former editors. Donato says nothing about the family name, which is doubtless linked to their speciality, the production of velvet.²² On the other hand, the author, who introduces himself in the role of a judge, sets out five generations of his forebears in a series of five surnames, which takes him back to an ancestor called Berto, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. (It is indeed the epoch when the family's place of origin, the large town of Semifonte, was razed by the Florentines (1202).) But our chronicler is unable to say whether this origin is matter of fable or of true history, because it has only been transmitted through the family's oral tradition. Moreover, he does not find one document confirming their establishment in Florence at that time. The first document which proves his past dates from 1244, and only goes back to his great-grandfather and his brothers, three generations before him; all the Velluti of his own time are descended from three of these four brothers.²³

Implanted in Oltrarno, in a sector still covered with vegetable plots and gardens, the Velluti, according to Donato, owned a tower, house, and trade premises

²¹ Klapisch-Zuber, *Retour à la cité*.

²² Velluti, *La Cronica domestica*, ed. by Del Lungo and Volpi. On the Velluti family, see de La Roncière, 'Une famille florentine au XIV^e siècle', pp. 227–48.

²³ Velluti, *La Cronica domestica*, pp. 4–5.

there. The family spread into the immediate neighbourhood, and Donato provides a precise account of the divisions and migrations which detached his great-grandfather Bonaccorso from his brothers. Just as other family writers such as Niccolini and Tornaquinci were doing or would later do, Donato concentrates on these urban implantations in his memoir, at the same time justifying their civic seniority. But after this introduction, Donato launches into a long digression on the main issue, the founding of the Guelph identity of the Velluti,²⁴ which sets them against a Ghibelline family and involves them into a series of vendettas and counter-vendettas, twenty-eight years after the first murder.²⁵ These episodes show that even though Donato Velluti spends a lot of time dwelling on the 'Mannelli vendetta', he has discerned the facts which situate his family among the ranks of the honourable citizens, merchants, and historical actors, and thus firmly on the good side of the governing bodies from the end of the thirteenth century.

This is therefore a memoir which is rather short. Is there room for a 'mythical' ancestor in it? After the section of the *Cronica* occupied by the vendetta, Donato's narrative is populated with mini-biographies of men and women, without any of these forebears, collaterals, and relatives standing out enough to be considered a fabulous ancestor. The acknowledgment stated at the beginning of the book has pre-empted any exaggeration: its author is unable to elaborate on the provincial origins of the Velluti although, as we shall see, this topic is highlighted by others, in particular Bonaccorso Pitti, who came from the same place, and even more by Giovanni Morelli.

Indeed, in the book he started in 1412, Bonaccorso di Neri Pitti (1354–1432) strives to account for the antiquity of his family, established in Florence for a good two centuries.²⁶ He also knows its rural origins, in the same Semifonte from which the Velluti came, but he hardly knows anything else, other than that three branches come from this family. They are the Luiesi, the Ammirati, and the Pitti, who after the destruction of Semifonte established themselves in different places in the *contado* and in the city, where they acquired good and beautiful properties; their identical coats of arms bear witness, according to Bonaccorso, to their original family

²⁴ It is worth mentioning that, in the sixteenth century, this passage was destroyed by a descendant on the autograph manuscript of Donato, and then carefully erased on the copy the descendant had made.

²⁵ On these conflicts and their resolution, see Klapisch-Zuber, 'Les soupes de la vengeance', pp. 259–82.

²⁶ Many editions have been published since the eighteenth century, the most recent being Pitti, 'Ricordi', ed. by Branca, pp. 341–501, and the French translation *Bonaccorso Pitti*, trans. by Fiorato.

connection. After the destruction of Semifonte, those who were to become the Pitti had therefore lost no time in settling in Florence where they prospered. The first ancestor whose name he knows and to whom he gives a biographical element, six generations before him, is a Bonsignore who died at the end of the twelfth century during his pilgrimage in the Holy Land and to the monastery of Saint Catherine of Mont Sinai, and who left a posthumous son: 'il quale non tornò né seppesi dove si morisse' ('who never came back and we never knew where he died'), laments his descendant, for whom a life — and the biography which would follow — must culminate in a tomb duly decorated with a coat of arms.²⁷

All the same, this pilgrim was not a crusader, fighting for his faith. We do not find any more prestigious forebears, valiant warriors, fabulous, or mythical ancestors among the Pitti than among most of the other members of the merchant aristocracy. It was probably rather Bonaccorso Pitti himself who gained this status from his descendants through the roles he says he played at the turn of the fifteenth century and the regalia conferred on him as a result of his adventures. In addition, it should be noted that Pitti did not, any more than did Velluti, seek to justify his family name by giving it a particular meaning.

This is not the case with his contemporary Giovanni Morelli (1371–1444), who attempted to glorify ancestors who were not illustrious. 'Perché oggi ogni catuno si fonda in grande antichità, e però vo' mostrare la verità della nostra' ('Since nowadays everyone roots himself in great antiquity, I wish to show the truth of ours'), he explains in the introduction to his book of *Ricordi*, written between 1393 and 1411.²⁸ He picks out the succession of his ancestors up to the eighth generation and fixes, by a series of calculations on the ages at which men married and inherited, the establishment of the Morelli in Florence 300 years earlier, at around 1100.²⁹ The first to settle in Florence is thought to have been a certain Benamato, who arrived there as a young man — in his twenties, according to our author's calculations — and would have been considered of a 'noble' spirit.³⁰ The contradiction, and this is not the only one, is

²⁷ 'il quale per lo nome del padre fu chiamato Bonsignore' ('who was named Bonsignore after his father's name'). Pitti, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 353.

²⁸ Morelli, *Ricordi* (1956), ed. by Branca, p. 81. The text has been reedited in *Mercanti scrittori*, ed. by Branca, pp. 101–339, mentioned on p. 103. I have quoted from the edition of 1956.

²⁹ Morelli, *Ricordi* (1956), ed. by Branca, pp. 83–84.

³⁰ 'indotto da' nostri cittadini antichi e nobili, i quai conobbono in lui virtù e gentilezza' ('attracted by our ancient and noble citizens, who saw in him virtue and gentility'), and 'e che e' fusse isperto molto in cose nobili e none in grossolane e che e' si ritraesse al gentile' ('and that he was a real expert in noble not base things, and that he would apply to all that is virtuous'). Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 110.

flagrant because Giovanni affirms elsewhere that his ancestors established themselves in Florence ‘come persone non ricchi ma piuttosto bisognosi’ (‘as people who were not rich but rather needy’),³¹ and that they gradually enriched themselves by working as dyers and money lenders. The contradiction continues: in his forties Benamato seems to have allied himself with good Florentine families, ‘saputo che l padre e’ suoi antichi in Mugello erano ricchi, temuti e riveriti e che la sua casa abbondava di tutti i beni, i quai assai veniano dal padre e da’ suoi parenti di Mugello’ (‘knowing that his father and his Mugello forebears were rich, feared, and respected, and that his house was full of goods from his father and his Mugello relatives’).³²

What is important for Giovanni is to know how far back to go to find the eponymous ancestor of the Morelli, because the name is significant: the Morelli are ‘Black’ Guelphs, as opposed to ‘White’ Guelphs. His great-grandfather Morello di Giraldo, also known as di Calandro, could well be this eponymous forebear because, he tells us, he would have received this forename at his baptism.³³ But this is yet another point on which Giovanni seems to contradict himself. Indeed, he goes on to report that this Morello, who had taken refuge in Arezzo in the wake of a quarrel after he had addressed the white Guelphs in favour of the black Guelphs, obtained from the captains of the Florentine *Parte Guelfa* — the paragovernmental institution which controlled political orthodoxy at the time — an attestation as a ‘true and perfect Guelph’, which allowed him *or* his father to bear the arms of the town of Arezzo and to defend themselves against a later attack by the ‘whites’.³⁴ He goes on to say: ‘E per questa cagione, perché sempre tennono parte Nera, fummo nominati i Morelli, dirivato da parte Nera, com’è detto’ (‘It is for this reason, because we have always taken the side of the Blacks, that we were named the Morelli, a name derived from the Black party as has been said’).³⁵ The doubts of our author about the beneficiary of the attestation and of the bearing of arms³⁶ suggest the solution of

³¹ Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 83.

³² Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 111.

³³ ‘E fra gli altri e’ [Giraldo] n’ebbe uno che si chiamò Morello, e così ebbe nome al santo battesimo’ (‘And among the others he [Giraldo] had one whom he called Morello, and so he was named at the holy baptism’). Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 118.

³⁴ Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, pp. 131–33.

³⁵ Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, pp. 132–33.

³⁶ ‘concedettono l’arme a Morello, ovvero al padre; non ho bene a mente in cui di loro occorre il caso, ma questo fu la verità propria’ (‘conceded the bearing of arms to Morello, or to his father; I cannot remember which one of them received the arms, but it truly happened’). Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 132.

the apparent contradiction of the text on the denomination of Morello at baptism, or the Morelli after the Arezzo episode. Moreover, Giovanni does indeed confirm that, to better proclaim his recently validated Guelph sentiments, the child's father would probably have named his son Morello when he was baptized.³⁷

Married to an Alberti and therefore forever excluded from municipal honours following the exile of his in-laws in 1393, at the end of the fourteenth century Giovanni Morelli was regarded with suspicion by the current regime. He probably would have heavily promoted this episode involving his forebears in about 1300, in order to prove his fidelity and that of his family to the right party, because he goes on to emphasize that the beneficiary title of Guelphism was again awarded to his uncle Bernardo and to the whole Morelli family, without doubt in the 1370s, when the *Parte Guelfa* was powerful on the Florentine political scene. In his *Ricordi* Giovanni is certainly keen to state an attachment to Guelphism and to civic republicanism, going so far as to advise his descendants, somewhat cynically, to always ensure they were on the side of whoever is in power.³⁸

The question of whether the name of this great-grandfather of the author became or stayed the *cognome* of his descendants' line, making him the eponym of the Morelli lineage — as Giovanni is claiming when he drafts his *Ricordi* — is therefore based on a political partiality, violently expressed by this Morello or by his father, in front of a 'Ghibelline' or 'white' audience. This may have been expressed even more violently than Giovanni thought, to revoke the accommodations of his ancestors with Ghibellinism. Because, despite his proclamations on the fidelity to Guelphism of the family and their own region, certain thirteenth-century alliances by marriage with Barucci and Schelmi girls could cast doubt on this, at least for that epoch. The Barucci is cited by Giovanni Villani as having been Ghibelline since before 1250;³⁹ like the Schelmi, they were active in the Ghibelline government of Florence between 1260 and 1266.⁴⁰ In 1343 the Schelmi were also dropped from

³⁷ He concludes the passage by repeating: 'E perché sempre fummo Neri di parte, ci siamo nomati Morelli; eziandio Giraldo, per rispetto di parte Nera, della quale divoto, puose nome Morello al figliuolo' ('and because we were always of the Black side, we called ourselves Morelli; this is why Giraldo, as a tribute to the Black faction to which he was devoted, called his son Morello'). Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. by Branca, p. 135.

³⁸ Tripodi, "'Tieni sempre con chi tiene e possiede il palagio e la Signoria'", pp. 203–66; Pandimiglio, *Famiglia e memoria a Firenze*, I, pp. 75–252.

³⁹ Villani, *Nuova cronica* I, ed. by Porta, v, chap. 39.

⁴⁰ Ravaggi and others, *Ghibellini, Guelfi e Popolo grasso*, pp. 29, 70, 72.

the list of magnates⁴¹ into which they had been inserted by Giano della Bella at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴²

In short, the familial eponym served to efface an old stain and allow the family to be reborn under a name whose meaning stripped them of their Ghibelline associations. But if this Morello is the most valuable of the ancestors that Giovanni Morelli can brandish to bolster his civic position at the beginning of the fifteenth century, his exploits are confined to the rather lowly domain of mercantile success and to a fight between partisans when the White Guelphs (assimilated into the Ghibellines) were left dead on the field. This Morello is not really prestigious, and even less mythical, which means his descendant must produce documents and explore his own account books⁴³ to support his opinions, his role, and his political status. These are standard procedures for merchant-authors but which, as we have seen, are not as commonplace among the noble aristocracy, who were careless about maintaining their family archives.

On the other hand, what emerges from the myth is the picture painted by Giovanni of this heavenly Mugello from which his forebears sprang, and he apologizes for having taken up so many pages in its description.⁴⁴ In fact, the first three generations whose establishment in Florence he reports — Benamato, Calandro, and Ruggieri — seem to be laborious personifications of the virtues (beauty, goodness and fidelity, and greatness) of this mythical country, but personifications which are caught between the modesty of their country origins (even poverty), the reputation acquired through toil and merchandise, and the noble aspirations, the quasi-gentlemanly values. To sum up, there is nothing exciting which could qualify them as familial heroes. When Ildefonso di San Luigi, in the eighteenth century, unhesitatingly attributes an original nobility to the Morelli, he is clearly supporting the

⁴¹ This 'famiglia antica e da bene' according to Morelli (*Ricordi* (1956), ed. by Branca, p. 121) had a Ghibelline reputation, although it had been considered a Guelph family for a long time. See Klapisch-Zuber, *Retour à la cité*, pp. 36, 234, 456, Appendix 1.

⁴² Raveggi and others, *Ghibellini, Guelfi e Popolo grasso*, p. 263 n. 53.

⁴³ Morelli, *Ricordi* (1956), ed. by Branca, p. 122.

⁴⁴ 'Io mi sono disteso sopra i fatti del Mugello in più lungo sermone ch' i' none estimai nel principio. E perché non é iscritto d'utilità o d'alcuna buona memoria, me ne scuso, avendomi tirato l'amore dell' antichità nostra e appresso l'ordine principiato' ('I have devoted to the facts of the Mugello a longer account than I had expected. And since it is not a writing useful or true to memory, I apologize, as I was so taken with love for our antiquity and with what I had begun to write'). Morelli, *Ricordi* (1956), p. 104.

passages in Giovanni's *Ricordi* by taking them to the letter.⁴⁵ This is because, in his own time, the Morelli had carved out for themselves a prominent place in the Medicean court, and were able to argue not only for the longevity of their line within the city walls but also for the positions they had occupied in the aristocracy and the government of the city.

A contemporary and neighbour of Giovanni Morelli, who himself also lived in the Florentine parish of San Simone, in the Santa Croce district, and was also an author of *ricordanze*, was Lapo di Giovanni Niccolini dei Sirigatti (1356–1430). He was a prudent businessman, richer and more active than Morelli and a more successful politician. Niccolini also begins his *Libro degli affari proprii di casa* by setting out his complete *identikit*: he is preceded by eight generations of which at least six are under the anthroponymic label of the Sirigatti.⁴⁶ Niccolini also evokes his region of origin, Passignano di Val di Pesa, but without expounding on it, preferring to spend longer on evoking the houses built by his ancestors who had immigrated to Florence.⁴⁷

These eight generations take the family history back to the middle of the twelfth century, with two of the most ancient ancestors, Lucchese and his son Bonavia, of whom our author only gives us the names. It is actually with the fourth generation, in other words with his great-great-grandfather Bonaguida, alias Ruzza d'Arrigo di Lucchese, that he places the episode which gave rise to the identity of the Niccolini de' Sirigatti, the urban branch of this old *contado* lineage with which he especially identifies himself. And as with the Velluti the episode is bloody, a dark story of murder perpetrated during a hunting party and the ensuing vendetta. The victim of the hunters — the Scolari, who were considered to be Ghibelline and were later listed as magnates — was a grandson (*nipote*) of this Ruzza. The conflict which followed the death ended with a 'peace' between the Scolari and Sirigatti families, sanctioned by the espousal of Niccolino, a son of Ruzza, with a Scolari girl, the sister of the victim of the vendetta, thus producing the branch of our author Lapo di Giovanni Niccolini (or 'di Niccolino').⁴⁸

If the eponymous ancestor was the husband — willingly or not, because he was a 'garzonetto' (a young boy) at the time of his marriage to the enemies' daughter — it

⁴⁵ Ildelfonso di San Luigi, *Delizie degli eruditi toscani*, XIX; Morelli, *Ricordi* (1956), pp. 105, 110–11.

⁴⁶ *Il Libro degli affari proprii*, ed. by Bec.

⁴⁷ *Il Libro degli affari proprii*, ed. by Bec, p. 55. See also Klapisch-Zuber, "Parenti, amici, vicini", pp. 953–82, reprised in French in *La maison and le nom*, pp. 59–80.

⁴⁸ *Il Libro degli affari proprii*, ed. by Bec, pp. 56–57.

is certainly his father Bonaguida, known as Ruzza, whom the writer of the memoir chose to present as ‘mio principio e di mio lato’ (‘my origin and that of my branch’). According to Niccolino’s description, Ruzza is presented as a more convincing hero than the young Niccolino: he was handsome and tall, he also had an exceptionally long life,⁴⁹ and he must be given credit for the success of the vendetta and the subsequent peace. The narrative also evokes the legendary Florentine on the origin — a promise of marriage which was declined — of the conflict between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, which would lead to blood on the city’s streets in the thirteenth century: for the Sirigatti, it was the hunters’ dispute over a boar which resulted in the coveted bride. Whether it was to trigger a war or to strengthen a peace, marriage alliances between rival clans often structured the Florentine memory of the familial and civic past. It is still the case that the opposition of the Sirigatti to the Scolari was a return to a family tradition of Guelphism which situated them clearly on the right side of the partisan battles of the *contado* in the second half of the thirteenth century. This is a prestigious, if not mythical, ancestor: if Ruzza was not the eponym of the Niccolini, there is no doubt that he is at the root of the economic and political success of the new line which really came into being through his son’s marriage.

It should be noted that Lapo could likewise have focused on an ancestor who does not appear in his narrative, to wit the father of this Ruzza. Because Arrigo alias ‘Sirigatto’, eponym of the Sirigatti family and attested in the first half of the thirteenth century, is said to have conducted himself valiantly at the battle of Benevento, in 1266, where his bravery earned him the nickname of Sirigatto, ‘the Sire with the cat’, a reference to the leopard on his ancestral coat of arms.⁵⁰ However, although he maintained friendship, business, heritage (and heraldic) links with a few Sirigatti consorts, Lapo was far too preoccupied with distinguishing his line, under the new name of Niccolini, to dwell on that of the *consorteria* of the Sirigatti and their eponymous hero. As it happened, the Sirigatti of Florence died out in the fifteenth century while the Niccolini went on to be made marquises of Ponsacco and Camugliano in 1637.

The name of their lineage matters to the Florentines because it feeds their familial and genealogical imagination. The Spini, for example, owe the name under

⁴⁹ ‘Questo ffu uno huomo grande del chorpo, e bello, e pro della persona, e vivette circha a ciento trenta anni’ (‘This man was tall and handsome, and good looking, and lived more or less for a hundred and thirty years’). *Il Libro degli affari proprii*, ed. by Bec, p. 56. Lapo’s father had met him.

⁵⁰ Plesner, *L’emigrazione dalla campagna*, trans. by Pinto.

which they have been known since the thirteenth century to a marriage, for, as one of their descendants has written, their history begins with another denomination. The Spini were rich bankers but their different branches were declining at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Doffo di Nepo degli Spini, for convenience, recorded some notes on their past; he traced the genealogy of his paternal ancestors name by name and proposed to draw it 'very roughly but [as well as he] could'.⁵¹ In 1416 he entrusted this memorial mission to a book of *ricordanze*, opened the previous year and initially intended for the management of assets.

Doffo begins by recalling that his lineage was originally not called Spini but Moscadi and that the familial shield was, in fact, sprinkled with flies (*mosche*). It was the last of the Moscadi who caused the change of his descendants' name when he married a Scali and baptized one of his sons Spina, the name of the father or brother of this wife; this Spina thus figures as the eponymous ancestor of the Spini. This Spina was moreover the cause not only of the change of name for future generations, but also of the heraldic change, by removing the obtrusive, and now unnecessary, flies from the Moscadi shield.⁵² Doffo also focuses on proving, beyond this ancestor, the antiquity of his lineage through an object which he had been given: it is by means of a battle saddle bearing the arms of the Moscadi that he believes he can provide an unquestionable link between his family and a more ancient family, and thus can extend by several extra degrees the account of the generations of ascendants. Doffo is therefore faced with his eponymous ancestor, five generations before him. For him, this is important because in the absence of mythical ancestors he, like many of his contemporaries, aligns their ascendance to a meaningful name.

For all these 'merchant-authors' — Pitti, Velluti, Morelli, etc. — of whom the substance of the *popolo grasso* had been composed since the end of the thirteenth century, the awareness of their ancestors, who came from the countryside and earned their civic colours after they settled in the city, prevents them from attributing prestigious origins to their families. This is equally true for a member of the Florentine aristocracy whose fortune, in all senses of the word, underwent ebbs and flows in the fifteenth century. Another descendant of a relatively recent family, Giovanni di Pagolo Rucellai (1403–1481), was a rich banker as remarkable for his culture and patronage as he was for his bad political fortune which deprived him of

⁵¹ 'e oltre acciò farò la figura per discendenza di dipintura così grossolano com'io saprò'. *Ricordi di Doffo di Nepo degli Spini*, fol. 16. Albeit without editing it, Claudia Tripodi thoroughly studied this very interesting work, and published her research in *Gli Spini tra XIV e XV secolo*.

⁵² *Ricordi di Doffo di Nepo degli Spini*, fol. 16.

civic roles. His ancestors owed their name ('de Oricellariis') to the tinctorial plant imported from the Levant, the *oricello* or archil, which they introduced to Florence, becoming specialists in its use. To historians Giovanni is primarily known as the author of a *Zibaldone*, a collection which has been made known through the work of Alessandro Perosa and Francis W. Kent,⁵³ and which has recently been fully edited by Gabriella Battista.⁵⁴ As with many other Florentines he can roll out his paternal genealogy and, eight generations back, he can identify the founder of the lineage, a Breton who in the wake of an unidentified emperor settled in Campi, near Florence. This ancestor, a Templar Knight, doubtless lived in the twelfth century and his chivalrous dignity would at some point have bestowed his name, Templari, on his first descendants. But it is only since his great-great-grandfather, who lived in the mid-thirteenth century, that Giovanni is more forthcoming: Nardo was the first of his forebears to become known by the name Rucellai, about whom he can boast of riches, civic functions from 1302, and good marriage alliances.

The emblem of a profession has therefore, once again, served as a sort of eponym for the lineage and has taken the place of the chivalrous dignity acquired earlier by an ancestor of the Rucellai. Whether rich or more modest, the members of the merchant class can glorify themselves without depriving themselves of allusions to the profession which was at the origin of their fortune. But the remarkable feature here is that everyone succeeds in reconstituting an in-depth thread of his line, if threadlike it be. The Tuscan anthroponymic system makes it possible to recover the filiations without too much trouble and thus to construct genealogies based on patronyms. Seven or eight generations, often known by a single name, belie the statements about the genealogical memory of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, which would not go much farther than the great-grandfather.⁵⁵ Even if, for example, this is the case in Florence for a rather obscure merchant such as Niccolò del Buono Busini in 1408,⁵⁶ then a Neri Strinati in 1312⁵⁷ or a Matteo Palmieri in 1427⁵⁸ can, thanks to various documents and the oral tradition, reconstitute their ascendance up to the eighth or ninth degree. And this is indeed what

⁵³ Rucellai, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone*, ed. by Perosa; *A Florentine Patrician and his Palace*, ed. by Kent and others.

⁵⁴ Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, ed. by Battista.

⁵⁵ Bourin and Chareille, 'Le choix anthroponymique', pp. 229–30.

⁵⁶ *Libro di Niccolò del Buono di Bese Busini*, fol. 8^v.

⁵⁷ Strinati, *Cronichetta di Neri d'Alfieri*, p. 98.

⁵⁸ *Libro di ricordi di portate e altre memorie diverse di Messer Matteo di Marco di Antonio Palmieri*, fol. 130.

the Florentine authors of genealogies aim to do: root the antiquity of their families in the preceding two or three centuries. The claim to prestigious or mythical ancestors counts for less than the restitution of a continuous series of names, which in themselves ensure the prestige of a family — something that Morelli understood only too well.

Modern Appropriations

The previous practices were full of promise for those who were less well born than Giovanni Cavalcanti, but it was in the sixteenth century that such people started, with a certain impudence, in other words in full awareness, to give themselves fabulous ancestors. According to Giorgio Vasari, the presumption and arrogance of the Florentine sculptor Baccio Bandinelli (1493–1560) was the object of jibes and hostility by the Florentines. Vasari reserves for the conclusion to his ‘Life’ of the artist a brief paragraph in which he notes Baccio’s pretensions to a higher birth than his own.⁵⁹ While his father, a goldsmith called Michelagnolo di Viviano, came from Gaiola, a village in the *contado*, Baccio changed his name after 1530 from Brandini to Bandinelli, inventing a connection with this celebrated Sienese family, which led to his receiving the title of Knight of St James. In his *Memoriale* begun in 1552, Baccio appropriates the past of the Bandinelli and claims that this family, of Franconian origin, had been given lands in Tuscany by no less than Charlemagne.⁶⁰

His talented competitor, and avowed enemy, the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571), who was no more modest than he, recalls that the name Cellini, brought to Tuscany by the lieutenant of Julius Caesar ‘Fiorino da Cellino’, is carried by some gentlemen of Ravenna, ‘the oldest town in Italie’, as well as by some Tuscan family in the profession of arms; however Benvenuto ‘boasts a lot more, being of humble birth, of having brought some honour to my house as if I, born in a great lineage, had clouded it with mendacity’.⁶¹ His genealogical memoir considers his beginnings from a great-grandfather who came from Val d’Ambra to settle in Florence. However, later on in the account of his life, he returns to his Ravennese

⁵⁹ ‘his family name [...] was not always the same, but varied, Baccio having himself called now de’ Brandini, and now de’ Bandinelli. [...] afterwards he preferred the name de’ Bandinelli [...] and he used to say that his ancestors were of the Bandinelli da Siena, who once removed to Gaiuole, and from Gaiuole to Florence’. Vasari, *Lives of the Painters*, trans. by De Vere, II, p. 309.

⁶⁰ Bandinelli, *Memoriale*, fol. 3; Bandinelli, ‘Memoriale’, ed. by Barocchi, II, pp. 1359–1411.

⁶¹ Cellini, *Vita*, p. 17.

namesakes to appropriate for himself a little of their prestige: 'our very honourable Cellini gentlemen', he writes, bear arms which are almost the same as those his father had said belonged to them, and this heraldic community, as we know, is considered to be the clue to an ancient kinship. Therefore, it was only grudgingly that Benvenuto resolved to sculpt on the tomb of his brother (buried there in 1529) the shield of their own Florentine family, rather than that of the Cellini of Ravenna, as the relationship with the Ravennese gentlemen appeared to him to be not only plausible but far more prestigious.⁶²

One could no doubt find plenty of examples of such hijackings of kinship and appropriations of fabulous ancestors from the modern age, and indeed Roberto Bizzocchi has presented a large variety of them. The medieval antecedents of these processes are not rare but they are more hesitant. The field of computing ancestors had yet to be conquered by professional genealogists, paid by individual families. The merchant origins of most of the redactors, who were amateur genealogists writing in their spare time, explains why they favoured duly authenticated documents similar to those they handled every day while exercising their profession, and why they only endorsed current oral traditions in the city or in their lineage in the absence of written proofs. An examination of the genealogical texts produced by Florentine families between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggests that, in the climate of one-upmanship in terms of the urban seniority reported by Morelli, it was more advantageous to refer to local ancestors, partisan battles, and civic functions than to some progeny of Noah, Janus, or Libyan Hercules, or even one of Julius Caesar's lieutenants or Charlemagne's valiant knights. If the formation of the family names from an eponymous ancestor, more fortunate in business than the others, predominates from the fourteenth century, it precludes a citizen from attaching themselves to a mythical forebear. And it is only from the moment that these civic honours were crushed by princely power that the citizens, aided by the genealogists, no longer hesitated to invent fabulous connections.

Conclusion

The founding of Fiesole, the first city in Italy and even in Europe, is described by Villani in the first book of his *Chronicle*, which goes from the origins of Fiesole to its destruction by Caesar in 72 BC: aided by an Apollonian oracle, the founder, whom he calls Attalante or Attalo, or even a certain Atlas, descendant of Japhet,

⁶² Cellini, *Vita*, pp. 102–03.

son of Noah and son-in-law of the African Atlas, is supposed to have chosen the site because of the healthiness it owes to the winds coming down from the mountains and the purity of its water.⁶³ Here is a mixture of the two elements that we find in the Florentine genealogies: the eulogy of the region of origin and filiation on the biblical model. But in contrast to the royal or princely dynasties of the end of the Middle Ages, what Florentine genealogists, whether nobles or merchants, still do not dare claim for themselves, is the link with biblical times. Their modesty on the antiquity of their origins confines them to a past which is, at most, multi-secular.

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⁶³ Villani, *Nuova cronica I*, book I, chap. 7, I, pp. 11–13.

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FRANCUS, THE TROJANS, AND THE KINGS OF FRANCE: VISUALIZING FABULOUS GENEALOGIES IN THE LATE RENAISSANCE

Ewa Kociszewska

Quant aux Troyens, c'est vrayment grand merueille que chasque nation presque d'un commun consentement s'estime fort honorée de tirer son ancien estre de la destruction de Troye: En ceste manière appellent les Romains pour leur premier auteur, un Aenee: les François, un Francion les Turcs, Turcus; ceux de la grand'Bretaigne, Brutus; et les premiers habitateurs de la mer Adriatique se renomment d'un Anthe-nor. Comme si de là fust sortie une pepiniere de chevaliers, qui eust donné commencement a toutes autres contrées, et ce que par grande providence divine eust causée la ruine d'un pays pour estre l'illustration des cent autres.¹

(As for the Trojans, it is true wonder that each nation, almost as if by some common agreement, consider itself greatly honored to find its earliest ancestors at the destruction of Troy. In such manner, the Romans call their original genitor Aeneas; the French, Francus; the Turks, Turcus; those of Great Britain, Brutus; and the earliest inhabitants of the Adriatic Sea take their name from a certain Antenor. As if this place had been a breeding ground for knights who were to give a beginning to all countries and as if by great divine providence it had caused the fall of a country, and also to be the celebration of a hundred others.)²

¹ Pasquier, *Des recherches de la France*, p. 68^r.

² Quoted in Ronsard, *Franciad* (1572), trans. and ed. by Usher, p. xxviii.

Ewa Kociszewska, Assistant Professor, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw

In this passage from *Des Recherche de la France* (1560), the French humanist Etienne Pasquier aptly summarized the European obsession with mythical genealogies reaching back to Trojan heroes. Since antiquity, kings, princes, nations, cities, families — all those aspiring to power — had sought to trace their origins back to the refugees from legendary Troy. If the European nobility looked towards this fabulous Oriental royalty known for its heroic deeds,³ rulers appropriated the ideals of chivalry and justified their political ambitions on the basis of their descent from Aeneas and the Trojan blood running in their veins.

The myth of the Trojan origins of the French monarchs (and, more broadly, of the French nobility) can be traced to the seventh-century chronicle of Fredegar. Perpetuated and developed by chronicles and *chansons de geste*, the fall of Troy became a standard opening for all medieval histories of the French kingdom. The grandson of King Priam and the son of Prince Hector, Astyanax, survived the fall. He changed his name to Francus and, with other survivors, began wandering in search of a new home. The future Franks founded the city of Sicambria in the Danube valley and later moved to north-western Europe, where they settled near the river Rhine. Marcomir, the descendant of Francus, led Frankish troops to Gaul, where his son Pharamond was crowned the first king. From him descended Clovis, the first Christian king, and the later Merovingian, Carolingian, Capetian, and Valois kings.⁴

Quite early on, the legend faced criticism. The first signs of scepticism can be traced back to the ninth century, but it was only in the late fifteenth century that scholars started to overtly undermine the credibility of the Trojan origins of the French.⁵ The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed a series of learned works by Etienne Pasquier, François Hotman (*Franco-Gallia*, 1573), François de Belleforest (*Les Grandes annales et histoire generale de France*, 1579), and Jean du Tillet (*Recueil des roys de France*, 1580), which presented the Trojan genealogy as a fable or common opinion, and not as fact supported by historical evidence.⁶ Moreover, during that period, an alternative genealogy emerged and gained increasing

³ Jouanna, 'Images de l'Europe chez les historiens et les théoriciens', pp. 189–205.

⁴ On the Trojan myth in France see Klippel, 'Die Darstellung der Fränkischen Trojanersage'; Bossuat, 'Les origines troyennes', pp. 187–97; Jung, *La légende de Troie en France au Moyen Age*; Asher, *National Myths in Renaissance France*, pp. 9–43; Cohen, 'In Search of the Trojan Origins of the French', pp. 63–80.

⁵ Brown, 'The Trojan Origins of the French', pp. 135–78.

⁶ Huppert, 'The Trojan Franks and their Critics', pp. 227–41; Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History*.

importance; according to it, the Gauls, rather than the Trojans, were the forefathers of the French nation.⁷

Scholarly effort did not necessarily align with the needs of royal propaganda. Despite this erudite criticism, the Trojan legend was still employed in monarchical imagery. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the refutation of the myth by informed historiographers coincided with the production of elaborate visual representations of the French monarchs' Trojan ancestors. This essay attempts to study the dynamics of this imagery, its changing meanings and functions at the time of the last Valois and at the dawn of the Bourbon dynasty. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the purpose underlying the political use of the Trojan myth differed from that intended in previous centuries. At the peak of its popularity, during the Hundred Years' War, Trojan ancestry played a role in unifying the nation and creating a nascent French identity.⁸ With time, it became an increasingly important means of expressing the superiority of the kings of France, especially in the context of their imperial aspirations and rivalry with the Habsburg dynasty.

Perhaps the most original and visually ingenious example of the Trojan representation at the service of the French empire can be found in one of the many *tableaux vivants* staged for Henri II's entry into Rouen in 1550.⁹ Opposite the cathedral of Notre Dame, on a platform, stood a figure of Hector in full armour, which was fifteen feet tall. When the King approached the statue, blood from the wounds inflicted by Achilles spouted towards the clouds and took the shape of the triple crescent, the King's device.¹⁰ Henri II (1547–1559) had indeed adopted as his personal emblem the image of the crescent with the motto 'Donec totum impleat orbem' ('Until it fill the whole world').¹¹ The device was commonly interpreted as an expression of the King's imperial aspirations. In the scene staged in Rouen, the imperial prophecy contained in Henri II's personal emblem was linked to and explained by his descent from the Trojan Hector. As clarified by the poem

⁷ Pomian, 'Francs et Gaulois', pp. 41–105; Asher, *National Myths in Renaissance France*, pp. 156–67; Dubois, *Celtes et Gaulois au XVI^e siècle*.

⁸ Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology*, pp. 226–44, 228.

⁹ McGowan, 'Form and Themes in Henri II's Entry into Rouen', pp. 225–26; Wintroub, 'Civilizing the Savage and Making a King', pp. 465–94; Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror*.

¹⁰ *C'est la déduction du somptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatres*.

¹¹ Graham, 'Gabriel Syméoni et le rêve impérial des rois de France', p. 302; Hoffman, 'Donec totum impleat orbem', pp. 29–42.

displayed next to the statue,¹² the death of Hector should be seen as a part of a divine plan leading to the Valois Empire: without the fall of Troy, Francus would never have established a new kingdom. However, the scene explicitly reminded viewers that in the veins of French royalty ran the celebrated Trojan blood.

Significantly, the organizers of the entry did not choose Francus as the protagonist of the decoration, but his father. In the entry that celebrated the recent victory of Henri II over the English troops in Boulogne, the choice of Hector, a famous hero and the eldest son of the Trojan king, showed the superiority of the French over the English kings, whose mythical ancestor, Brutus of Troy, was instead merely a relative of Aeneas. For the sake of imperial propaganda, Hector was a more suitable ancestor: being older than Aeneas and heir to the Trojan throne, he epitomized not only a myth of ethnic origin but also the superiority of the French over other European nations. Still, Francus as a link between the Trojans and French kings was not completely omitted in Rouen. The etching published in the festival book of the entry shows, in the clouds above the statue of Hector, small figures which may represent Trojan refugees. Among them, on the left, a woman and a child are probably Andromache with Astyanax/Francus — a vague pictorial reminder of the dynasty's forefather. Curiously, no effort was made to establish a genealogical connection between the Trojans and the Valois kings, even though such link would have suited the theatrical narrative. The other station of the entry included the spectacular procession of fifty-seven French kings, Henri II's predecessors, staged by Rouen citizens dressed in elaborate costumes. Pharamond, not Francus, marched as the first king of France. The isolated statue of Hector thus exemplified the new attitude of Renaissance monarchs towards their mythical ancestors, who were now used as allegorical figures rather than real forefathers. Additionally, the procession starting with Pharamond conformed to the well-established tradition of visualizing the genealogy of the French monarchy. One of the most important ceremonial spaces in the kingdom, the monumental Grand'Salle of the Palais de Justice (destroyed by fire in 1618), housed a cycle of life-size statues of the kings of France, from Pharamond to Henri III.¹³ This impressive decoration was commissioned by Philip IV, and, over the years, subsequent rulers continued to be added until the end of the Valois dynasty. The images of Francus were missing, not only

¹² *C'est la déduction du somptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatres*: 'Mal ne me fait, de Troye la ruine, | Ny d'Achilles le coup me meurdrissant, | Puis que ie voy que mon sang insigne, | Faveur du ciel forme un treple croissant, | Qui remplir ceste ronde machine' ('The destruction of Troy does not hurt me, | Neither does Achilles' strike wound me, | Since I see that my famous blood, | Thanks to Heaven forms a triple crescent, | That will fill the earth').

¹³ Bennert, 'Art et propagande politique sous Philippe IV le Bel', pp. 46–59.

from this former royal residence but also from the impressive project of historical tapestries, *L'Histoire françoise de nostre temps*, which started with Pharamond, presented to Catherine de' Medici by learned apothecary and polymath Nicolas Houel in the 1560s.¹⁴

The conspicuous absence of the illustrious Trojan forefather distinguished the art at the French court from the prolific artistic production of the greatest enemy of the French monarchy, the Habsburg dynasty. As the upstart family rose to the dignity of Holy Roman Emperors, they needed to fabricate a prestigious genealogy. Maximilian I actively supported his scholars' efforts to trace his origin back to Priam and Hector. The Trojan genealogy of the imperial family was explored in elaborate and monumental works.¹⁵ The Habsburgian obsession with genealogy, which was ingeniously represented through the visual arts in different media, is without analogy in the court of Renaissance France. Perhaps in response to the appropriation of the Trojan imagery by the Habsburg rivals, in November 1565 Charles IX (1560–1574) finally commissioned from Pierre de Ronsard the *Franciade*, a national epic recounting the story of Francus.¹⁶ The commission was preceded by years of more or less subtle pleas for royal patronage by Ronsard, interwoven with odes praising the French monarchs' Trojan origins.¹⁷ In his thorough analysis of the circumstances that led to the creation of *Franciade*, Denis Bjäi noticed that the commission for the epic came immediately after a long Tour de France by Charles IX and Catherine de' Medici. Between 1564 and 1565, in the midst of civic conflict, the young monarch travelled across his kingdom. The travel culminated in Bayonne, close to the Spanish border, where the King met with his elder sister Elisabeth of Valois, Queen of Spain. In all the *bonnes villes* of the kingdom, the royal family was welcomed by entries and spectacles, which often included the figure of Francus. The popularity of the motif in popular imagery might also, as Bjäi suggested, have convinced the King to commission the epic.¹⁸

Charles IX commissioned Ronsard to produce a work that would present the complete genealogy of the kings of France and consolidate the Trojan myth of

¹⁴ Guiffrey, *Les dessins de l'Histoire des Rois de France*; Gaechtgens, 'Cathérine de Médicis et l'"Histoire Françoise de nostre temps"', pp. 149–67.

¹⁵ Laschitzer, 'Die Genealogie des Kaisers Maximilian I', pp. 1–46; Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas*, pp. 103–09; Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*, pp. 320–22.

¹⁶ Bjäi, *La Franciade sur le métier*.

¹⁷ Ménager, *Ronsard*, p. 280.

¹⁸ Bjäi, *La Franciade sur le métier*, p. 31. In 1564 the Trojan theme was present in the royal entry into Lyons and Troyes, as well as at a spectacle in Gaillon.

origins. The *Franciade*, for the king, had to serve a double task, historical and political: it was to finally solve the problem of royal ancestry and firmly establish the lineage from Francus. Charles IX wanted accuracy: no king was to be omitted. A historically reliable epic, outshining the incredible genealogical constructions of the Habsburg newcomers, was particularly needed in the climate of imperial expectations that was widespread at the time of the commission. The election of the new Holy Emperor was coming, and Charles IX, like his father and grandfather, expected to receive the title. Prophetic discourses predicted the great future of the King of France.¹⁹ In this context, an epic praising the race directly descended from Hector and Francus would be especially welcome. In 1572, the first four books of the *Franciade* appeared in print. Ronsard was overwhelmed by the royal duty of merging historiography and poetry:

la meilleure partie des nostres pense que la Franciade soit une histoire des rois de France, comme si j'avois entrepris d'estre historiographe, et non poëte; bref, ce livre est un roman comme l'Iliade et l'Aenëide, où, par occasion, le plus brièvement que je puis, je traite de nos princes, d'autant que mon but est d'escrire les faits de Francion, et non de fil en fil, comme les historiens, les gestes de nos rois.²⁰

(most of our people believe that the *Franciad* is a history of the kings of France, as if I had undertaken to be a historiographer and not a poet. In a word, this book is a romance like the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*, wherein I have the opportunity to deal as briefly as possible with our Princes, especially since my goal is to write of Francion's deeds, not thread by thread as do the historians writing the deeds of our kings.)²¹

Nevertheless, to satisfy at least part of his patron's wishes, Ronsard attempted to present a chronicle of the French kings. The fourth and final book of the unfinished epic is almost exclusively devoted to the past rulers. To introduce the sequence, the voice used is that of Hyante, daughter of Cretan prince Dicée. Hyante prophesizes that Francus will travel and found France; she then enumerates his descendants, the first generation of rulers of the kingdom. In this way Ronsard, as he admitted in the foreword, only praised possible and not necessarily real events. He wrote the *Franciade* using the old chronicles without judging whether 'cela est vray ou non, ou si nos roys sont Troyens ou Germains, Scythes ou Arabes; si Francus est venu en France ou non, car il y pouvoit venir' ('it is true or not, whether our kings are

¹⁹ Haran, *Le lys et le globe*, pp. 124–26, 134–35.

²⁰ Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Céard, Ménager, and Simonin, I, p. 1165.

²¹ Ronsard, *Franciad*, trans. and ed. by Usher, p. 4.

Trojans or Germans, Scythes or Arabes; whether Francus came to France or not, because he could come').²²

A year before publication, in March 1571, the *Franciade* provided a blueprint for the royal entry into Paris. The primary aim of this ceremony was to celebrate the recent marriage of Charles IX with the emperor's daughter, Elisabeth of Austria. The Valois-Habsburg union revived the imperial dreams about a restoration of Charlemagne's domain.²³ The Trojan ancestry to which both sides laid claim was not an object of rivalry this time. Instead, it was presented as the presage of a great future.²⁴ Two branches of Hector's descendants were about to unite and produce a new emperor. In this political and prophetic climate, the Trojan genealogy became useful in the planning of the programme of the entry. The ceremony was devised by Ronsard and his master, Jean Dorat. The two poets supervised the work of the artists involved in the project, including painter Camillo dell'Abate and sculptor Germain Pilon.²⁵ The mythical genealogy of the monarchy was presented in the first, the largest and ceremonially most important triumphal arch, erected at the Porte Saint-Denis. The monumental structure in rough Tuscan order was shaped *à la rustique* and adorned with (possibly ceramic) vegetation and lizards, a visual language suitable to present the story of the birth and origin of a dynasty.²⁶

At the top of the arch there stood two large bronze figures of Francus and Pharamond. Francus held a sword and was accompanied by an eagle, which, in the *Franciade*, was a symbol and omen of his courage.²⁷ Below the statue was a painting depicting a wolf, which — as a programme of the entry explains — signified Francus's unstoppable conquest of Gaul.²⁸ Next to Francus there stood the statue of Pharamond with a sword and a raven, which represented a happy omen for people founding the new colonies.²⁹ The painting situated below Pharamond showed a cow,

²² Guy, 'Les sources françaises de Ronsard', p. 232; Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Céard, Ménager, and Simonin, I, p. 1167.

²³ Haran, *Le lys et le globe*, pp. 128–31.

²⁴ Yates, *Astraea*, pp. 130–33.

²⁵ Yates, 'Poètes et artistes dans les entrées de Charles IX', pp. 61–84; Graham and Johnson, *The Paris Entries of Charles IX*, pp. 106–13.

²⁶ See Kociszewska, 'War and Seduction in Cybele's Garden', pp. 838–41.

²⁷ In Ronsard, *Franciade*, trans. and ed. by Usher, I, ll. 493–514, a falcon pursued by two vultures is transformed by Jupiter into an eagle which vanquishes its opponents (p. 108 n. 27).

²⁸ The image was based on Valeriano. See Graham and Johnson, *The Paris Entries of Charles IX*, p. 108 n. 29.

²⁹ Graham and Johnson, *The Paris Entries of Charles IX*, p. 108.

signifying the fertility of the French soil. The verses written on the arch explained the roles of these two mythical ancestors: Francus the conqueror of the Gaul, and Pharamond the founder of the kingdom. On the structure, there was enough room to install a tablet with a poem by Ronsard explaining that Francus, on his way to Gaul, impregnated a German princess. From this Trojan-German alliance, Marcomir and later Pharamond were born. In 1571, history was about to repeat itself: thanks to the marriage of Charles and Elizabeth, their 'race today is renewed in France'.³⁰

The *Franciade* was a useful theme for the ceremony, but did not receive more royal support and was no longer employed in the imagery of the last Valois kings. In 1573, the elaborate festivals celebrating the election of Henri de Valois, Charles IX's brother, to the throne of Poland included no allusions to the Trojan origins of the French monarchy. Antoine Couillard, a lawyer and amateur scholar, offered to the King of Poland a book, called *Epistre presentee au Tresexcellent et Invincible Roy de Pologne*, exploring the monarch's ancient connections with his new kingdom.³¹ According to it, before the Franco-Trojans settled in the French territory, they had founded not only Sicambria in Pannonia (modern Hungary) but also several Polish cities. Couillard stressed that Henri was elected to the throne of Poland by the inhabitants of the country established by Trojan/Frank forefathers. In this quirky work, Henri is therefore presented as a legitimate ruler of Poland. The fabulous heritage and speculative geography allowed the election to be described as a homecoming by the French prince to his hereditary dominion, an important motif for celebrations of his accession to the throne of Poland. The discourse of the *Epistre*, potentially useful for propaganda, did not meet with royal enthusiasm. Couillard mentioned that already in 1571 Renée de France sent him to the royal court to present the Valois princes with their genealogies

à commancer à Adam et finir iusques à vos regnes presens [...] et lesquelles genealogies j'avois avec grand labeurs recueillies [...] pour faire paroistre au Roy et à vous que quatre vingts Roys des Gaulois & François vos predecesseurs avoyent regné paravant le Roy Pharamond, ce que le Roy & vous trovastes fort estrange.

(commencing with Adam up to your present reigns [...] which genealogies I had compiled with a great effort [...] to show to the King and you that twenty-four

³⁰ Graham and Johnson, *The Paris Entries of Charles IX*, p. 110: 'la race d'aujourd'huy se renouvelle en France'.

³¹ Couillard, *Epistre presentee au Tresexcellent et Invincible Roy de Pologne*, pp. 3^v–4^r. For Couillard and his efforts to gain royal patronage see Champion, 'Henri III et les écrivains de son temps', pp. 57–59.

Gallic and Frankish kings had ruled before the King Pharamond, which the King and you found very strange.)³²

Apparently, the rulers were no longer interested in the construction of these incredible discourses of legendary genealogy. In the elaborate celebration of the Polish election in 1573, the Trojan theme returned, not as a story of ethnic origin, but only as an allusion to imperial aspirations. In *Ballet des Polonais*, a spectacle staged for the occasion, Catherine de' Medici was presented as Cybele — a tutelary goddess of the Trojans — while Henri de Valois was fashioned as a new Aeneas on his way to Latium/Poland, and therefore a step before the founding of New Rome.³³

During the reign of the last Valois king, Henri III (1574–1589), the legendary genealogies were left behind. Beside the attacks of erudite critics, the myth of Trojan origins was also abandoned for political reasons. After years of marriage, the King still had not produced an heir, and his younger brother François d'Alençon died in 1584. The candidate for the throne was now a distant relative, Henri de Navarre, a Protestant. In the context of the struggle for succession, genealogy — and not a fabulous one — was more important than ever. Some believed that the dukes of Lorraine, the main opponents to the Valois family, had better claims to the throne. They were legitimate descendants of Charlemagne, whereas the Valois descended from the usurper Hugo Capet.³⁴ An example of the genealogical visual propaganda from that time is a series of thirteen prints presenting the lineage of French kings beginning with Pharamond, which was produced by eminent Parisian printer Jean Le Clerc. The images were collated together and formed a six-metre-long genealogical tree.³⁵ They were displayed in the streets of Paris, which explains why only two copies survived. The genealogy was presented in the traditional form of a tree, and any change to the dynasty was illustrated simply with the discreet addition of a new branch. Le Clerc, loyal to the Valois, placed Henri de Navarre near the portrait of Henri III, thereby suggesting continuity between the ruling king and his future successor.³⁶ During this period of violence and struggle, the *Franciade* (often unjustly judged by contemporary scholarship as having been forgotten soon after 1572) was still published and read. Subsequent editions of the text appeared

³² Couillard, *Epistre presentee au Tresexcellent et Invincible Roy de Pologne*, p. 6'.

³³ Kociszewska, 'War and Seduction in Cybele's Garden', pp. 809–63.

³⁴ Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henri IV*, pp. 26–29.

³⁵ Gautier, *Mille ans d'histoire de l'arbre généalogique en France*, esp. pp. 80–83.

³⁶ Gautier, *Mille ans d'histoire de l'arbre généalogique en France*, p. 83.

in 1573, 1574, 1578, 1584, and (after Ronsard's death) 1587.³⁷ As Keith Cameron argued, Ronsard was well aware that his chronicle of the French kings included in book IV constituted a powerful polemical tool that could be used against the Valois dynasty. Between 1584 and his death in December 1585, Ronsard was heavily reworking the *Franciade* to make it even more 'vraysemblable' ('probable') than historically accurate. Cameron demonstrated that, to protect the Valois family and Henri de Navarre, Ronsard changed passages that sought to present the royal lineage. In 1587, the earlier text '& de ce Duc je veux | De pere en fils te montrer les neveux | Et les enfants yssus de ta lignée' ('I should also like to show you the descendants from father to son of this great leader and the children of your lineage', lines 831–33) was replaced by the vague '& de ce Duc je veux | Comme en passant te montrer les neveux | Et quelques Rois yssus de ta lignée' ('I should also like to show you in passing descendants of this great leader and some Kings from your lineage').³⁸ More than ever during this dangerous time of disputed succession, the *Franciade* was becoming less and less the chronicle desired by Charles IX, but increasingly a work of poetic fiction.

In 1589, the last Valois king died and Henri de Navarre became king. In the wake of the new dynasty, one might have expected that the first Bourbon monarch would forge a new imagery and, to some extent, a new genealogy. Indeed, Henri IV famously fashioned himself into Hercules.³⁹ The Gallic Hercules, a French response to Charles V's Herculean symbolism,⁴⁰ was already a well-known motif in royal imagery, promulgated mainly by Henri II's famous entry into Paris in 1549. For that occasion, the statue of Francis I was erected, whereas the king was shown as Hercule Gaulois with a chain of gold on his tongue. This motif, based on the picture that Greek sophist Lucian claimed to have seen in Gaul (translated by Erasmus in 1506), symbolized the civilizing power of royal words — an idea that would be so cherished by peace-making King Henri IV.⁴¹ The appearance of the Gallic Hercules in the royal imagery of the first half of the sixteenth century should be connected with contemporary works exploring the Gallic origins of the French nation, a rival to the fabulous Trojan genealogy. The influential

³⁷ Cameron, 'Ronsard and Book IV of the *Franciade*', pp. 395–406.

³⁸ Quoted in Cameron, 'Ronsard and Book IV of the *Franciade*', p. 398.

³⁹ Vivanti, 'Henri IV, the Gallic Hercules', pp. 176–97; Dickerman and Walker, 'The Choice of Hercules', pp. 315–37.

⁴⁰ Rosenthal, 'The Invention of the Columnar Device of Emperor Charles V', pp. 210–21.

⁴¹ Sez nec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, pp. 24–26; Jung, *Hercule dans la littérature française du XVI^e siècle*, pp. 88–97; Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror*, pp. 46–49.

Renaissance mythographer Joannes Annius of Viterbo claimed to have discovered the lost writings of Berosus Babylonicus about the creation of the world and the origin of races. According to Annius's *De his quae praecesserunt inunda* (1498), Hercules left Libya and, after some time in Spain, went to Gaul. There, he married Galatea, daughter of the King of the Celts. From their union a son was born, called Galateus, an ancestor of the Pepin kings and Charlemagne. The work of the Pseudo-Berosus was a source for Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* (1506–1513).⁴² The Hercule Gaulois was exploited in royal entries of the Valois kings not as a mythical ancestor, but as the embodiment of the power of eloquence over arms. Henri IV, a restorer and peacemaker, particularly cherished this symbol. Unlike the case of the Valois monarchs, Henri IV's panegyrist openly claimed that the king was a descendant of Hercules. The fabulous genealogies presented in the royal entries into Lyons (1595) and Avignon (1600) discussed the king's lineage from a demi-god through the Spanish houses of Navarre and Foix.⁴³ This Herculean imagery was omnipresent in Bourbon propaganda, spanning medals and monumental frescoes, royal entries and national epic.

Despite the immense popularity of Herculean imagery, Francus somewhat unexpectedly made his great comeback at the turn of the century in the most ambitious pictorial enterprise of Henri IV's reign. In 1600, the King commissioned from Toussaint Dubreuil, his *premier peintre*, the immense cycle of seventy-eight paintings based on Ronsard's *Franciad*. It was to be displayed in the newly built Château-Neuf in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. With the exception of six canvases, the decoration did not survive the demolition of the residence in 1777, and is

⁴² See Poujol, 'Étymologies légendaires des mots France et Gaule', p. 912.

⁴³ Matthieu, *L'entrée de tres-grand, tres-chrestien, tres-magnanime, et victorieux prince, Henry III*, p. 28: 'D'une monstre à triple-front la rage fut punie | Par Hercul qui planta le sceptre Navarrois, | De cest Hercul descend l'illustre sang de Foix | Qui chasse la fureur et rompt la tyrannie' ('The rage of a three-headed monster was punished | By Hercules who planted the sceptre of Navarre, | From this Hercules descends the illustrious blood of Foix | Who chases away the fury and breaks up tyranny'). *Labyrinthe royal de l'Hercule gaulois triomphant*: 'L'illustre maison de Navarre a prins la source de l'ancien Hercule, fils d'Osiris, lequel ayant battu et combattu les Lominiens, qui estoient les trois enfans de Geryon, tyran des Espagnes, et ayant affranchi ce peuple de leur servitude, établit en cette monarchie son fils Hispalus, les nepveux duquel succedèrent depuis à la couronne du royaume de Navarre' ('The illustrious house of Navarre issued from the ancient Hercules, son of Osiris, who, having fought and overcome the Lominians, the three children of Geryon, the tyrant of Spain, and having freed the people of that country from their servitude, established as head of that monarchy his son, Hispalus, whose descendants later succeeded to the crown of the kingdom of Navarre'). Translated in Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, p. 23.

known only through Dubreuil's drawings and eighteenth-century descriptions. The impressive illustration of Ronsard's unfinished epic closely followed the text showing Francus's journey and arrival to the court of Crete, where he fell in love with princess Clymène and then fell in love again with her sister, a sorcerer named Hyante. The cycle ended with Hyante's prophecy of the foundation of France and its future kings. Dubreuil's paintings were a triumph of poetry over historiography: most of all, they represented a story of adventure and romance. The genealogy and myth of Trojan origins were virtually absent there. Nonetheless, the protagonist of this imposing decoration was Francus, the fabulous forefather of the nation. The subject, as well as the visual idiom of the cycle, demonstrated continuity with the art sponsored by the Valois dynasty. Dubreuil, the master of the so-called Second School of Fontainebleau, was an epigone of the style featured in great frescoes cycles created for Francis I and Henri II. His Italianate mannerist compositions were born from the tradition of the workshop of Fontainebleau, where Primaticcio painted the gallery of Francis I and the gallery of Ulysses. Beside this stylistic tradition, the gallery in Château-Neuf illustrated on a large scale the epic associated with Charles IX and the Trojan myth of the previous dynasty. Nevertheless, the Trojan myth of origins was no longer valid: Dubreuil's decoration did not state the fabulous Trojan genealogy of the king, but indirectly highlighted the link between Henri IV and the Valois.

Despite the absence of the Trojan theme, the very choice of Francus as a hero of the cycle was inevitably charged with genealogical meaning. Phillip John Usher has noted that no series of royal portraits was included in the cycle, suggesting that the *Franciade* in Dubreuil's version was presented only as a poem, a great story of an adventurous journey and amatory exploits involving two princesses (the last topic naturally seemed appropriate given the reputation of Henri IV).⁴⁴ Hyante's vision foreseeing the destiny of Francus and his descendants in France was not depicted. Nevertheless, this omission did not necessarily mean an abandonment of the genealogical theme. Obviously, this theme was historically and politically controversial, since the Bourbons' dynasty had started only with Louis IX. From an artistic point of view, illustrating the 'book full of kings'⁴⁵ — a monotonous sequence of largely imaginary effigies — would have been an uneasy and, at the same time, unrewarding task. Instead of presenting the content of the prophecy, Dubreuil depicted the act of prophesizing, after portraying the complicated preparations for the magic

⁴⁴ Usher, *Epic Arts in Renaissance France*, pp. 150–51.

⁴⁵ Ronsard referred to the *Franciade* as a 'livre plein de Rois' in 'A luy-mesme luy, luy donant sa Franciade', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Céard, Ménager, and Simonin, I, p. 444.

ritual described by Ronsard in book IV. Dubreuil, as the meticulous reconstruction of Dominique Cordellier shows, followed the text of the *Franciade* closely and devoted a separate painting to each stage of the preparations.⁴⁶ The large scale canvas, considerably larger than previous scenes from the cycle (1.91×3.52 m and 1.92×1.89 m),⁴⁷ represented scenes such as Hyante showing Francus the valley where she would reveal his ancestry,⁴⁸ Hyante gathering the magical herbs, Francus perfuming his body with incense and sulphur, and Francus sacrificing a sheep and an ewe. According to the eighteenth-century description, the last scene from the *Franciade* included in the cycle represented Hyante talking to Francus and 'Mercury and two phantoms' in the background. The painter suddenly ended his story in the scene when the revelation starts, leaving the audience in suspense: the viewer thus saw the preparation for the ritual, but not the vision of the French monarchs.⁴⁹ Pharamond and Marcomir, described in the first lines of the prophecy, appeared in the painting (in smaller format 1.92×1.27 m) only as tiny apparitions in the distance. As previously mentioned, the sequence of Francus's descendants would have proved politically awkward for Henri IV. The narrative interrupted at the culminating moment did not give the viewer a historical lecture, but rather promised a vision of future greatness. Therefore, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Francus was shown not as an ancestor, but as an archetype of the dynasty's founder — a figure appropriate for the first Bourbon monarch.

The dates of commission and beginning of Dubreuil's work on the cycle coincide with the actual founding of the Bourbon dynasty: the delivery of the Dauphin. In 1599, the Pope annulled the King's childless marriage with Marguerite de Valois. The peace established during the first decade of Henri IV's rule could not last without an heir to the throne. The death of the King's beloved mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées, opened way to a dynastic marriage with one of the European princesses. In April 1600, he married by proxy Marie de' Medici, who gave birth the next year to the future Louis XIII. The *Franciade* was painted at the propitious time of the nativity of the first heir to the French throne after almost fifty years.

Château-Neuf, one amongst the many architectural schemes of Henri IV, was a royal suburban villa, a sort of *maison de plaisance*.⁵⁰ The king wanted his children

⁴⁶ Cordellier, 'Dubreuil', pp. 357–78.

⁴⁷ The extant paintings of the cycle from the Louvre measures 1.07×0.97 m; 1.3×1.85 m; and 1.9×1.4 m.

⁴⁸ Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins, inv. 26260.

⁴⁹ Cordellier, 'Dubreuil', p. 372.

⁵⁰ Kitaëff, 'Le Château-Neuf de Saint-Germain-en-Laye', pp. 73–139; Lurin, 'Le Château Neuf de Saint-Germain-en-Laye', pp. 123–47.

(both legitimate, like Dauphin Louis, and illegitimate) to live in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which was situated close to Paris but was safe from the dangers of the capital.⁵¹ The function of the residence as a royal *otium* was reflected in its architecture, which combined intimacy with magnificence. The most prominent feature of the Château was a complex of spectacular terraces descending towards elaborate gardens equipped with grottos, fountains, and automata. As Emmanuel Lurin has shown, the visual sources on the grottos suggest that their decoration stressed the role of little Louis, depicted promenading with his father or apotheosized as a crowned dolphin. Château-Neuf seems therefore a residence 'rustic, familial, and perhaps dynastic' in its programme and character.⁵² The gallery by Dubreuil was possibly central to the ideology of the royal villa. The very presence of the future Louis XIII and his siblings amongst the painted ghosts of Francus's descendants was the best fulfilment of Hyante's prophecy: they were embodiments of a lineage in the making. At that time, for the nascent royal dynasty, the future was far more important than the fabulous past.

The omission of the 'chronicle of kings' (book IV) in Château-Neuf did not mean that no genealogical cycle was commissioned during the reign of Henri IV. In November 1601, Dubreuil's workshop started decorating the vault of the newly finished Petite Galerie (now Galerie d'Apollon) at the Louvre. The upper floor of the Louvre was planned as the great ceremonial sequence consisting of the Grande Galerie and Petite Galerie, with the latter serving as an ante-chamber.⁵³ In 1600, André de Laval wrote a short treatise, *Des peintures convenables aus Basiliques et Palais du Roy, memes à sa Gallerie du Louvre à Paris*, discussing a suitable iconography for the royal gallery.⁵⁴ To prevent painters from decorating the Louvre with inappropriate landscapes or scenes from mythology, he proposed a genealogical gallery of Henri IV's ancestors. Laval argued that the King 'peut produire le plus vénérable and aut antique arbre de Genealogie de Rois ses Ancêtres qui se puisse voir sur la face de la terre, et qui peut dire que sa maison toutes les autres couronnes de la Chrérienté tirent leur plus beau lustre' ('can present the most venerable and authentic genealogical tree of Kings his Ancestors that one could see on earth, and can say that his house has the greatest splendour as compared to the other crowns

⁵¹ Heroard, *Journal de Jean Heroard*.

⁵² Lurin, 'Le Château Neuf de Saint-Germain-en-Laye', p. 147.

⁵³ Ballon, *The Paris of Henri IV*, p. 50.

⁵⁴ Published in de Laval, *Desseins de professions nobles et publiques*, pp. 445^r–53^v. On this treatise see Thuillier, 'Peinture et politique', pp. 175–205.

of Christianity'),⁵⁵ which, as Thuillier noted, only proves the contrary. Laval's ideas were accepted, and Dubreuil produced a template for the royal portrait to be used in the gallery.⁵⁶ The painter died accidentally in 1602, so the realization of the cycle was commissioned to Jacob Bunel and his wife, Marguerite de Bahuche. The decoration was to include realistic representations of the kings of France, starting from Saint Louis to Henri IV. In the historically oriented gallery, there was no space for fabulous mythology, and no claims of descent from Francus or the Trojans were (could ever be) made. Still, the myth was inevitably linked with the image of the King of France, and even Laval, seeking to present the reliable genealogy of Henri IV, did not want to completely forget about the Trojans. For the 'portique du roi' in the gallery, he suggested an elaborate allegorical scene based on the new device of the King. The motto of the royal device — *ORBI LVMEN COLVMENQVE SUO* — Laval explained, was taken from *Troades* by Seneca;⁵⁷ a chorus of Trojan ladies praising the great prince Hector as

Columen patriae, mora fatorum
 Tu praesidium Phrygibus fessis
 Tu murus eras, humerisque tuis
 Stetit Troia decem fula per annos, etc.

(Pillar of our country, delayer of doom, you were a protection for weary Phrygians, you were a wall, and by your shoulders she (Troy) stood buttressed for ten years.)⁵⁸

For Laval, Henri IV was a new Hector primarily because of his achievements in protecting the kingdom, and not for his Trojan origin. Unlike the entry decorations for Henri II made half a century before, in which the Trojan blood was directly linked to the King's imperial destiny, neither the *imago* of the device — a blazing sun — nor the painting made any allusions to the King's genealogy.

As Philip John Usher has recently argued, in late sixteenth-century France the myth of Trojan origins was expiring much more reluctantly than scholars previously believed. During the *grand siècle*, the myth reappeared in the works of court historiographers, whose practice was often divorced from historical criticism,

⁵⁵ de Laval, *Desseins de professions nobles et publiques*, p. 449^r.

⁵⁶ Cordellier, 'Un modèle de Dubreuil', pp. 484–88.

⁵⁷ de Laval, *Desseins de professions nobles et publiques*, p. 452^r; Thuillier, 'Peinture et politique', p. 205.

⁵⁸ Seneca, 'Trojan Women', trans. and ed. by Fitch, I, p. 124.

especially when working for the state.⁵⁹ Visual representations of the Trojans to some extent followed this dynamic; over time, depictions of such mythical genealogies became more and more elaborate in scale and in programme. In 1571, the magnificent figures of Francus and Pharamond by dell'Abate and Pilon were accompanied by the words *ut fama*, emphasizing that the Trojan lineage was just a 'common opinion'. Dubreuil's *Franciade* linked poetry and politics without any historiographical claims. As the story of the Trojan origins became less widely believed and less politically charged, it provided increasingly attractive iconographic material. The example of Nicolas Poussin's unfinished cycle of the *Labours of Hercules* for the Grande Galerie of the Louvre could serve as a coda to the late Renaissance depiction of mythical genealogies. Hercules was chosen as the cycle's protagonist because of his popularity in encomiastic literature arising from mythical genealogies.⁶⁰

The myth was fantastically flexible and could be adjusted with little effort to current political needs in both the domestic and international arenas. Though sometimes risky, the Trojan theme seemed particularly important at the time of dynastic marriages. If the union with another ruling house necessitated a reminder about the great past of the French kings, this great past was also essential to delineate a successful future for the French monarchy. The hopes for an heir, a guarantee of dynasty survival, were expressed by reminding the King of his royal ancestors. All great genealogies, in the end, aim to evoke a great destiny.

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NOAH, BRUTUS OF TROY, AND KING JAMES VI AND I: BIBLICAL AND MYTHICAL ANCESTRY IN AN ANONYMOUS GENEALOGICAL ROLL

Sara Trevisan

In the archives of the College of Arms, in London, there is preserved an anonymous parchment scroll produced in the early seventeenth century, which traces the genealogy of King James VI of Scotland and I of England (1566–1625) from Noah.¹ Half of the genealogy is devoted to the mythical ancestors of the ancient British-Welsh kings, sprung from Brutus of Troy, and of the ancient Scottish kings, originating in Greece and Egypt; both are ultimately descended from Noah through his son, Japhet.

The linear naturalness with which the post-deluge Noachic civilization connects with the origin myths of English, British-Welsh, and Scottish nationalism and with the historical present, makes the College of Arms pedigree an emblematic instance of the programmatic syncretism of early modern royal genealogy. As they sought to reconcile native, classical, and biblical etiological narratives,² such royal pedigrees traced the monarch's descent to the utmost antiquity, grounding the right to rule both in the prestige of Greco-Roman civilization and in the divinely-sanctified lineage of biblical kings. The purpose of this essay, which is also the first study of this genealogical roll, is to explore how the biblical and mythical ancestors of the

¹ *Genealogy of King James I from Noah*, College of Arms, Unbound MSS 12/12.

² Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas*, p. 70, where a similar phenomenon is analysed in early sixteenth-century Habsburg royal celebration.

Sara Trevisan, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of Warwick

kings of England, Wales, and Scotland were recruited for nationalist discourse at the dawn of the seventeenth century, and the important political role they played as royal forefathers but also as models of governance and even typological figures.

College of Arms, Unbound MSS 12/12: Production and Content

The period spanning the mid-1590s to 1603 was a critical moment in the history of Britain. Although the possibility that King James VI of Scotland might succeed the heirless Elizabeth I to the English throne had not yet been officially announced, it was nevertheless known and discussed, despite the ban on public debates concerning the issue of succession.³ There was also widespread scepticism in England and Scotland concerning the possibility of a political union of the two Crowns. Grandson of Henry VIII's sister and the only son of Mary Queen of Scots — whose beheading had been ordered by Elizabeth I in 1587 — King James VI was an obvious candidate for the English throne in terms of consanguinity. However, in his last will and testament of 1546, Henry VIII had not included the Scottish line among his potential heirs.⁴ Furthermore, according to English law, as a Scotsman, King James was an 'alien', hence unable to inherit any property in England.⁵

Royal genealogy proved to be an important ideological tool in this political situation. It was essential for James VI and I to assert that his succession to the throne of England 'passed by lineal hereditary right, all Acts of Parliament and other exercises in law notwithstanding'.⁶ In the year of his coronation, the King asserted in Parliament that he held 'the right and title of both [kingdoms] in my Person', being 'alike lineally descended of both the Crownes' of England and Scotland.⁷ Approved

³ Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?*, pp. 141, 370.

⁴ Nenner, *The Right to Be King*, p. 14.

⁵ Nenner, *The Right to Be King*, pp. 57–58. By the mid-1590s, religious concerns had contributed further to foster the polarization of succession debates. On the one hand, militant Catholics, worried about potential Protestant persecutions under James's rule, opposed his succession on genealogical grounds — many of them supported the Catholic Spanish Infanta, daughter of Philip III — maintaining that consanguinity was not the sole factor in the choice of a monarch's successor. On the other hand, after a time of indecision, Protestants began to defend King James's succession. Kewes, 'The Puritan, the Jesuit, and the Jacobean Succession', pp. 64, 66. This religious background is an important element in the College of Arms genealogy, and takes the form of rubricated quotations from the Old and New Testament located around the diagram. There is no room here to do justice to this additional layer of meaning.

⁶ Russell, '1603: The End of English National Sovereignty', p. 5.

⁷ King James, 'Speech to Parliament, March 1603', ed. by Rhodes and others, p. 296.

a year after his accession, the Act of Recognition stated that, according to the laws of God and man, the imperial crown of England had ‘descended’ on King James ‘by inherent birthright and lawfull and undoubted succession’.⁸ This ‘undoubted succession’ and ‘lineal descent’ were not only exalted in celebratory poems reciting King James’s pedigree from the Tudors, Edward III, or William the Conqueror;⁹ they were also visualized through complex genealogical tables tracing his ancestry to the times before the Norman and Saxon invasions, back to the Trojan origins of Britain, and ultimately to Noah and even to Adam. Such complex genealogical trees were also used to support James’s claims to be king not only of Scotland and of England (to which Wales had been definitively annexed during the reign of Henry VIII), but of a unified Britain. The King was a descendant of the divinely-ordained kings of the Bible, and, as King of a Greater Britain, he was also the descendant not only, like previous kings of England, of the Trojan Brutus and the Germanic god Wodan — the mythical founding fathers of the British-Welsh and the English-Saxons — but also of King Fergus and Gathelus, the fabulous ancestors of the Scots.

The College of Arms roll is an emblematic example of the intricacy of King James’s ancestry, and of the complex reconceptualization required to visualize his all-embracing right to rule in genealogical form. Our pedigree begins on the left side of the roll with Noah, Japhet, and the Trojan Brutus, followed by the mythical British-Welsh kings and then the historical kings of South Wales, Powis, North Wales, and Cardigan. The line of the fabulous and historical Scottish kings, from Noah to Kenneth I, ends in a binary: with Walter Stewart, ancestor to the royal Stuarts and descendant of the Welsh princess Ness ap Llewelyn and of Fleance, son of Banquo; and with a daughter of Ness and of Trahern ap Caradoc, ancestor to the Scottish Bruces. The right side of the pedigree continues with the Stewarts, the Bruces, and the kings of England, highlighting the union of Malcolm III’s daughter with the Anglo-Norman Henry I. The kings of North Wales are shown as ancestors to the Mortimer family, from whom descend Richard Duke of York, while the Kings of Glamorgan, South Wales, and Powis are presented as ancestors of Owen Tudor and the Tudor dynasty. Through the union of Margaret Tudor, sister to Henry VII, and James IV of Scotland, the Scottish, English, and Welsh lines are joined, leading to King James VI and I.

The content of the College of Arms pedigree is drawn from *The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, Iames*, published in 1604 by Welsh antiquary George

⁸ Quoted in Russell, ‘1603: The End of English National Sovereignty’, p. 5.

⁹ See, for instance, the anonymous *An Excellent New Ballad, Shewing the Petigree of Our Royall King IAMES*, Michael Drayton’s *To the Maiestie of King Iames*, and John Howson’s *Genealogia Iacobi VI Scotie, Anglie Fran. Hiber. I, ab Eduardo III^o*.

Owen Harry. This half-diagrammatic and half-textual pedigree traced the complex descent by which, as king of 'great Brittain', James's ancestry reached back 'by diuers direct lynes' to the Trojan Brutus, 'first Inhabiter of this Ile of Brittain', and eventually to Noah, 'first monarch of the world'. Included in the royal tree were also dozens of pseudo-biblical and mythical ancestors of classical origin, which derived from the fusion of three different genealogical traditions. First was that of Annius of Viterbo's *Commentaria super diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium*, published in 1498 (of which more below); second, the Welsh genealogy of Aeneas and other Trojan heroes from Noah, as found in *Y Bibyl Ynghymraec* ('the Bible in Welsh');¹⁰ and third, the genealogical history of the kings of Britain from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (c. 1136).¹¹ As will be shown in the course of this essay, the Welsh nationalist royalism of the last two traditions was so obvious at the time that the College of Arms genealogist could not possibly have chosen this material randomly. In particular, the genealogy borrowed the diagram appended to Owen Harry's booklet, which is now absent in most extant copies, as it was frequently detached to be hung somewhere else or be consulted more easily. In this essay, the College of Arms pedigree and its source will therefore be studied side by side, as they can illuminate one another in unexpected ways.

The Roll Format

The roll format of the College of Arms pedigree reflects a genealogical tradition dating back to the medieval period. The roll as a material support for genealogical diagrams had first been used in the twelfth century by Pierre of Poitiers to represent the genealogy of Christ from Adam in his *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi*;¹² the first genealogies of the kings of England in roll format had appeared slightly later, in the thirteenth century.¹³ But, in England, the roll also bore a

¹⁰ Williams, *Historical Texts for Medieval Wales*, p. xxiii. Brutus's line from Japhet includes Iavan, Ketim, Tharsus, Dodoneus, Ketim, Electra, Dardanus, Erichtonius, Tros, Asaracus, Capis, Anchises, Aeneas, and Ascanius.

¹¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, which recounted the history of the British kings from Brutus's settling in Britain to the death of Cadwallader in AD 682, was a Latin translation of material drawn from the Welsh *Brut y Brenhinedd*. Williams, *Historical Texts for Medieval Wales*, p. xxiv.

¹² Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres*, pp. 132–33.

¹³ de Laborde, *Histoire, mémoire et pouvoir*, p. 65.

symbolic value, having been used for the transcription of official documents starting from the Anglo-Norman period.¹⁴

Increasingly widespread between the thirteenth and early fifteenth century, pedigree rolls of extreme length and sophistication, featuring genealogical diagrams of the kings of England surrounded by textual extracts, provided a lay audience who was educated yet unable to read Latin chronicles with a means of approaching and learning about national history.¹⁵ Until the early fifteenth century, the history these rolls told usually began with the Saxon Egbert or Alfred, or, under the influence of the vernacular *Brut* chronicles, with the landing of the Trojan Brutus in Albion. In the mid-fifteenth century, this tradition developed into more complex rolls, which traced the origins of the English kings to the most remote past possible, even incorporating the genealogies of Genesis following Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium*. These rolls featured both the descent from mythical British and Saxon ancestors, and that from biblical forefathers, from Adam via Noah and his son Japhet, father of the European peoples. The inclusion of biblical and mythical ancestors within a scheme of universal history strengthened the genealogical identity of the royal line by rooting its prestige in the authority of antiquity.¹⁶ With the accession of Henry VII the number of royal pedigree rolls began to wane. Of these, some stressed his British descent via the Welsh line of the Tudors, while others reprised the dual-ancestry model showing the king's descent from Adam via the fabulous British and Saxon kings.¹⁷

However, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods there was a revival of royal genealogies produced on parchment scrolls. This revival began with Edmund Brudenell's pedigree tracing Elizabeth I's descent from Adam and Eve, and was later reprised to celebrate King James I by Morgan Colman in 1604 and Thomas Lyte in 1610. Despite its similarity to these genealogies in aesthetic conception and format, the quality and size of the decorations of the College of Arms genealogy suggest that it may have been produced by a heraldic artist or antiquarian gentleman of average skill for a private house. The top corners, which appear to have been cut, may have been damaged while the pedigree was hanging on a wall, possibly in a parlour, hall, or library.

The genealogical diagram, drawn in ink on vellum, is surrounded by a frame with now discoloured leaves, and red, white, and blue-green flowers; it also includes

¹⁴ de Laborderie, *Histoire, mémoire et pouvoir*, pp. 133, 152.

¹⁵ Bovey, *The Chaworth Roll*, p. 31.

¹⁶ Redondo, 'Introduction', p. 6; Allan, 'Yorkist Propaganda'.

¹⁷ Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres*, pp. 196–97; Anglo, 'The British History in Early Tudor Propaganda', pp. 41–47.

an architectural design with white putti holding olive branches and what look like black monkeys eating grapes from a vine. At the top of the roll is the King's coat of arms; below is James's figure, taken from a print published *c.* 1603.¹⁸ James is surrounded by four personified virtues, whose meaning in relation to him is explained in a poem situated at the centre of the roll. The four virtues are holding their typical iconographic attributes — the olive branch for Peace, the palm leaf for Victory, and so on — and were drawn from Philippe Galle's *Prosopographia* (1590). On the top left corner is an illustration of Noah's Ark at sea, complete with portraits of sundry animals. Beneath the Ark is the figure of Noah holding an armillary sphere, drawn after a portrait of Hermes Trismegistus in Jean-Jacques Boissard's *De divinatione et magicis praestigiis* (*c.* 1604). Interspersed throughout the roll are rubricated biblical quotations from the Old and New Testament.

From Noah to King James: Sacred Genealogies and Syncretism

In the medieval and early modern period, the genealogies of Genesis 10 — featuring Adam and Noah, the biblical patriarchs, and the genealogy of Christ — constituted the framework for universal history.¹⁹ Encyclopaedic works providing accounts of world history included the peopling of the earth after the Flood, and the detailed genealogies of the nations and peoples of the three continents inhabited by the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Cham, and Japhet.²⁰ In the prefatory letter to the *Genealogies Recorded in the Sacred Scriptures* (1610), later appended to the King James Bible, John Speed explained the historiographic importance of biblical genealogies:

The Spirit of God in the sacred History, hath laid downe such helps, as are the light and life of all Nations originals. In them the circumstances of Person, Time, and Place, are the chiefe; else doe wee wander as without a guide: [...] Genealogies then drawne from them, from whom all are descended, and by Gods owne warrant recorded vnto vs, must moue a special reuerence that they are holy, and farre from those other against which S. Paul writeth. Amongst whose manifold uses, this is the chieftest, that by them is prooued how Christ was made very man.²¹

¹⁸ Unknown artist, *King James I of England and VI of Scotland; Henry, Prince of Wales; Anne of Denmark*, 1603–1612. London, National Portrait Gallery, NPG D18233.

¹⁹ For further discussion see Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili* and Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres*.

²⁰ Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium*', pp. 375–90; Braude, 'The Sons of Noah', pp. 103–42.

²¹ Speed, *The Genealogies Recorded in the Sacred Scriptures*, p. 1.

Speed refers to St Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 1. 4, where the apostle warns about dealing with 'fables and genealogies, which are endless, which brede questions rather then godlie edifying which is by faith' — the same genealogies he defined as 'vnprofitable and vaine' in 1 Titus 3. 9.²² In the early days of Christianity, St Paul associated genealogies with the legal contentions of Rabbis, which only generated fruitless arguments, as opposed to the spiritual regeneration of Christians based on spiritual nobility rather than on the historical heritage of the Old Testament, rooted in genealogy and blood.²³ But Speed's own reasoning was the result of historiographic developments of the medieval period, by which the 'holy genealogies', warranted by God and explained in Genesis, had become the backbone of human history. According to universal historiography as established by chronicles of late antiquity, like Eusebius/St Jerome's fourth-century *Chronicon*, and of the middle ages, not only did these genealogies confirm that Christ was a man, but they also showed 'the light and life of all Nations originals', painstakingly listed in the so-called Table of Nations of Genesis 10, which traced the migrations of the descendants of Noah's sons.²⁴

This understanding of genealogy as a historiographic principle was influentially and successfully applied in the early modern period in the *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus loquentium* (1498) by Anniius of Viterbo. This was a compendium of world history inspired by the *Chronicon*, but allegedly based on the philological study of newly-discovered texts by ancient historians such as Manetho and Berosus.²⁵ These texts supposedly accounted for the lost times in the history of ancient civilizations within the framework of a universal history delineated in genealogical form, using Genesis as a starting point. Anniius's work sought to fill the gaps existing between post-deluge biblical genealogies and the earliest genealogies of the gentiles by integrating the genealogies of the Bible, of ancient eastern civilizations, of Troy, and of fifteenth-century nations,²⁶ in order to insert European civilization within a broader, uninterrupted scheme of Christian history beginning with Adam. The *Commentaria* thus portrayed world history in the form of an immense genealogy marking the fundamental origins and foundation of peoples and nations.²⁷

²² Speed, *The Genealogies Recorded in the Sacred Scriptures*, p. 1.

²³ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, p. 97.

²⁴ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, p. 153.

²⁵ For a full discussion of Anniius's *Commentaria*, see Stephens, *Giants in Those Days*, pp. 98–138.

²⁶ Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, p. 82.

²⁷ Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, p. 27.

A pivotal figure in the genealogical history of Annius's *Commentaria* was Noah — the protagonist of a section allegedly authored by the ancient historian Berosus. In the *Commentaria*, Noah was described as the only pious member of a race of giants that inhabited the earth before the Flood. His progeny included not only Shem, Cham, and Japhet, but also other giants who likewise populated parts of the world and entered the mythologies of sundry peoples and nations. Among their offspring were also euhemerized classical deities and heroes like Neptune and Hercules, as well as pseudo-biblical ancestors like Gomer, who provided a connection between the genealogies of the Bible and those of the gentiles. Annius was also seeking to celebrate the ancient civilization of Italy as independent from the civilizing influence of classical antiquity. The importance of Greco-Roman etiological narratives, the most important of which attributed the founding of European nations and dynasties to Trojan refugees like Aeneas, was thus shifted to the background and integrated within a broader history featuring new 'pre-histories' of European civilizations devised on the basis of previously unknown (and mythical) ancestors.²⁸

Although Annius's compendium was for the most part a forgery, and soon acknowledged as such, it left a lasting mark in early modern historiography, the methodology of genealogical research, the necessity of a synchronized chronology for world history, and the ideological uses of genealogy. Even as late as the seventeenth century, scholars such as Joseph Scaliger were debating ancient and biblical history in relation to Annius's *Commentaria*, which was still being used to 'support all religious positions, retell local and global histories [...] challenge the Greek and Roman traditions or integrate them into grander syntheses'.²⁹ For instance, in post-Reformation England, antiquaries like John Bale, John Twyne, and Raphael Holinshed reverted to Annius's texts to exalt the civilized pre-Roman past of Britain — which had been described as a 'wasteland' by humanist and Catholic historian Polydore Vergil — as the time of a prestigious and pristine culture antedating even the Trojan conquest.³⁰ The Annian material provided a way to declare that Britain had been populated by the offspring of Noah, bearers of the true civilization and the true religion; their first ruler, the giant Samothès, and his descendants taught their people religion and writing. But they were then conquered by Albion — a descendant of Cham, Noah's cursed son — who was later defeated by Brutus the Trojan.³¹

²⁸ Grafton, *Defenders of the Text*, p. 81.

²⁹ Popper, *Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World'*, p. 44.

³⁰ Popper, *Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World'*, p. 43.

³¹ For a detailed discussion of the use of Annius's work as an alternative or complement to the Greco-Roman myth in the Protestant antiquarian world, see Parry, 'Berosus and the

In the College of Arms genealogy, the interweaving of the origins of nations, peoples, and dynasties from Noah and his sons is visually fulfilled in King James's persona. In the roll, Noah is represented at the same level and as big as the figure of King James, to whom he is both related in genealogical terms, like the rest of humankind, and compared in typological terms. Particularly frequent during the Jacobean reign, comparisons of the monarch to biblical kings could serve as a means of praising, advising, highlighting the constant return of history, or — according to Protestant 'neo-typological' readings — showing that 'the types of the Old Testament found their fulfilment not only in the person of Christ, but also in individual believers of the New Covenant'.³² The pedigree thus interwove genealogy and typology presenting James I as a biblical king, with Noah being the first monarch of the world as James was the first monarch of a Greater Britain.

In a speech to Parliament, delivered in 1607, James portrayed Noah as an ancestor, when he stated that the 'Father of a familie', as the king is to his subjects, belongs to 'the lineall heires of those families whereof Kings did originally come', for 'Kings had their first original from them [Noah's sons and their descendants], who planted and spread themselves in Colonies through the world'.³³ But James was also celebrated as a Noah — a righteous figure ready to obey God and seize a new world through his heirs. In his *Poeticall Essayes* (1604), Alexander Craig wrote:

Thou like a *Noah* long hast kep't thy Arke,
Thoyld many storme by day, and gloomie darker
Yet would not breake thy ward till time thy God,
Hath lent thee leaue, and bids thee walke abroad:
But his command since thou would nothing do,

Protestants', pp. 1–21. See also Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, pp. 69–76. For a study of the influence of Anniius's historiography in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, see John, 'Fictive Ancient History and National Consciousness', pp. 175–206.

³² Doelman, *King James and the Religious Culture of England*, p. 74.

³³ This genealogical link comes from the medieval tradition of universal history rather than from the absolutist and patriarchal notion that kings were entitled to rule as descendants of Adam, to whom God had first conceded royal power. According to Robert Filmer, whose *Patriarcha* was to become the most important systematization of absolutist theories in the seventeenth century, as first progenitor and monarch of humankind, Adam was naturally endowed with an 'absolute fatherly rule' which determined an 'uninterrupted line of continuity' of royal power. However, unlike Robert Filmer, in his own political works King James did not advance 'the Adamite origins' of power rooted in the 'genetic moment of the creation of the law'. Cuttica, *Sir Robert Filmer*, pp. 111, 127.

Loe he hath ioynd his blessings therevnto.
 Come foorth with Wife and Children, sweete command,
 The blessing breok and multiply the land.³⁴

As King of Scotland and the new King of England, James was, like Noah, following God's command in leaving with his wife and children for London, to 'multiply' his kingdoms, just as Noah had sent his sons to colonize the world and multiply peoples and nations. King James himself was thus presented as the founding father of a new royal line.

The Annian tradition pervades the College of Arms pedigree. The gloss describing Noah as 'first monarch of the world' comes from the *Commentaria* as filtered first of all by Owen Harry's genealogy, where the material is marked as being taken from 'Berosus Caldeus', possibly via Richard Lynche's recent English translation of the *Commentaria*, as *An Historical Treatise of the Travels of Noah into Europe*



Figure 11. Detail: Noah, in Anonymous, 'Genealogy of King James I from Noah', London, College of Arms, Unbound MSS 12/12. Parchment roll, seventeenth century. Reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds, and Pursuivants of Arms.

³⁴ Craig, *The Poeticall Essayes*, B^r.

(1601).³⁵ However, unlike Owen Harry's genealogy, the College of Arms pedigree also provides a *visual* representation of Noah — a unique feature in the tradition of English royal pedigrees — which introduces a further dimension to the ideology of biblical ancestry. The depiction of Noah, wearing headgear reminiscent of Mithras's cult and holding an armillary sphere, was drawn in fact after the portrait of Hermes Trismegistus in Boissard's *De divinatione*. Boissard's work reprised the medieval tradition according to which Hermes Trismegistus (or Triplex) was a priest, philosopher, and king ('Sacerdos, Philosophus, & Rex') who reigned in Egypt after the Flood.³⁶ The early seventeenth-century rhetoric of royal celebration encouraged the identification of James VI and I — as a poet, biblical exegete, and political theorist — with the Platonic figure of the illuminated philosopher-king. Most notably, in the preface to his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Francis Bacon praised King James as possessing those 'virtues and faculties, which the philosophers call intellectual'; Bacon wrote, 'to have such a fountain of learning in himself, in a king, and in a king born — is almost a miracle'.³⁷ Bacon's panegyric culminated with an analogy comparing King James to Hermes Trismegistus:

there is met in your Majesty a rare conjunction, as well of divine and sacred literature as of profane and human; so as your Majesty standeth invested of that triplicity, which in great veneration was ascribed to the ancient Hermes: the power and fortune of a king, the knowledge and illumination of a priest, and the learning and universality of a philosopher.³⁸

The College of Arms genealogist shared Bacon's views on the intellectual multiplicity of King James's royal persona. However, Hermes Trismegistus was considered by other medieval authors to be only one of three Hermeases, who had lived at different times in history — the other two being Enoch and Noah.³⁹ As we have seen, Noah, like Hermes, had been portrayed as a scholar learned in theology and the arts. Through the figure of Hermes-Noah, the College of Arms roll therefore employed the tradition of genealogical syncretism started by Anniius and influenced

³⁵ Owen Harry, *The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, Iames*, p. 1. Anniius saw Noah typologically as a 'second Adam' in the sense that, since he and his family were the only survivors of the Flood, with them the world and human history had started anew. Stephens, *Giants in Those Days*, p. 111.

³⁶ Boissard, *Tractatus posthumus J. J. Boisardii*, pp. 140–41.

³⁷ Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon*, pp. 1–2.

³⁸ Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon*, p. 3.

³⁹ Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, pp. 48–49.

by Hermetic theories, to praise King James's intellectual efforts in letters, religion, and politics, as well as his ancestral ties with biblical rulers, in blood and office.

A King 'of the Brittish bloud': The Mythical British-Welsh and Scottish Kings

As mentioned above, the diagram of the College of Arms pedigree was drawn from Owen Harry's *The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James* (1604). This genealogy tracing James's descent from Noah was influenced not only, as we have seen, by Annius's *Commentaria*, but also by the royalist ideas of the Welsh gentry at the beginning of the Jacobean reign.⁴⁰ Owen Harry's genealogy traced the complex descent by which, as king of 'great Brittain', James's ancestry reached back 'by diuers direct lynes to Brutus, first Inhabiter of this Ile of Brittain'. The



Figure 12. Detail: The Genealogy of Brutus, in Anonymous, 'Genealogy of King James I from Noah', London, College of Arms, Unbound MSS 12/12. Parchment roll, seventeenth century. Reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds, and Pursuivants of Arms.

⁴⁰ According to Roberts, 'there are few indications that the writings addressed or dedicated to him [King James] by the Welsh publicists ever reached the king, let alone altered his opinions', 'Tudor Wales', p. 40.

lineal descent from Brutus to Cadwallader was based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, according to which in 1100 BC Brutus of Troy, grandson of Aeneas, had settled in Britain, founded Troynovant (London), and had provided the British people and their dynasty with a prestigious Trojan origin. The Brutus story thus reflected the continental mythographies attributing Trojan roots to European nations and their royal houses.⁴¹

The British-Welsh royal genealogy rooted in Trojan origins (the 'British History') had been incorporated for its prestige into the royal ancestry and history of the Anglo-Norman kings as early as the twelfth century; having descended from a conqueror, these kings had no roots in the country they were ruling. In fact, the ancient British kings could function not only as historical ancestors to the Welsh but also as political ancestors to their foreign successors, the Anglo-Norman kings. The British History retained its place in chronicles, royal pedigrees, and documents relating to the kings of England until the sixteenth century, when its content, the historicity of which had raised the eyebrows of more than one historiographer since the twelfth century, began to be systematically challenged.⁴² Despite these attacks, the British History lingered in insular historiography until the seventeenth century.

Like many other European etiological narratives, the British History was rooted in the understanding of history in genealogical form, as the patriarchal transmission of royal power from generation to generation.⁴³ In time, the genealogical intersections and descents which are the backbone of the British History began to cause increasingly complex debates, which reached beyond the issue of historiographic truth, into the plane of political rhetoric. In fact, the kin ties between Brutus's three sons — Lochrine, Camber, and Albanact — who received England, Wales, and Scotland respectively upon their fathers' death, were problematic for two reasons. First, if Lochrine was the eldest, the law of primogeniture operating in England would give him (hence England) pre-eminence over his brothers; second, if the original kings of the three parts of the island were related and their father had been the founder of the nation and its people, then the English, Welsh, and Scots must all be related as well.

During the reign of Edward I, England's right of overlordship of Wales and Scotland was invoked on the basis of Lochrine's right of primogeniture over his

⁴¹ For further examples of this process, see Shepard and Powell, eds, *Fantasies of Troy*; Waswo, 'Our Ancestors, the Trojans', pp. 269–90; Federico, *New Troy*; Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas*; and Ewa Kociszewska's essay in this volume.

⁴² Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, pp. 1–17.

⁴³ Spiegel, 'Genealogy', p. 49.

brothers. In the wake of the Reformation, during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, the British History was actively employed in support of a British imperial identity. This unified 'British' nation, under the Anglo-centric rule of the Tudors, was supported by a political rhetoric based on the ancient genealogical kinship among the three nations: the English, the Welsh, and the Scots were all Britons, being descended from one ancestor, Brutus, through his three sons.⁴⁴ An imperial Britain would thus include a pre-eminent England (Lochrine was the eldest), subjugated Wales, and Scotland, if not by conquest then through a proposed but never fulfilled marriage between Edward VI and Mary Queen of Scots.

However, the political strength of the British History saw the marginalized Welsh — the original 'owners' of the British past — acquire a firmer cultural identity,⁴⁵ which allowed sixteenth-century Welsh antiquaries such as John Price and Humphrey Llwyd to resist England's attempts to curb Welsh culture.⁴⁶ But, in the late sixteenth century, English antiquaries began to oppose this shared 'British' consciousness of the Tudor state stating that historical evidence pointed to the fact that not only was the story of Brutus a 'fable' but that, unlike the Welsh, the English were originally a Germanic people.⁴⁷

By the early seventeenth century, when Owen Harry and our genealogist were producing their royal pedigrees, the historicity of Brutus had indeed been heavily contested and almost completely dismissed by English antiquaries seeking to understand the ancient past of Britain. Studies on Saxon culture and language had gained momentum, showing that the roots of the English people lay more in Germanic origins than in the Celtic identity of the ancient Britons. Nevertheless, the British History continued to withhold an important role in the construction of a Welsh national consciousness.

Yet, a shift had occurred in Wales in the perception of national identity upon King James's succession: from the invocation of a Welsh-centred policy and culture as part of an Anglo-centric Tudor 'Britain', Welsh national ideology came to embrace a new British identity, featuring Wales as an equal partner in a politically unified island like that originally conquered and ruled by Brutus.⁴⁸ Such celebration of a unified Britain surfaces in the original poem at the centre of the College

⁴⁴ Schwyzer, 'Archipelagic History', p. 599.

⁴⁵ Jones, 'Early Modern Welsh Nationalism', p. 25.

⁴⁶ Jones, 'Early Modern Welsh Nationalism', p. 25.

⁴⁷ Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory*, pp. 31–36; Kendrick, *British Antiquity*, pp. 78–98.

⁴⁸ Jones, 'The Welsh Gentry', pp. 625, 627, 647.

of Arms genealogy, which visibly integrates and expands on Owen Harry's Welsh royalism. In the poem, the sceptres of Britain's three nations, incorporated in King James's own, are presented as 'the blessed Trinity | [...] three distinct but one in Vnitie', in which singularity and multiplicity are the same thing.

The diagram of the College of Arms genealogy should therefore be analysed in relation to the culture of the Welsh antiquarian environment of the early seventeenth century, in which Owen Harry himself was an important figure. As we saw above, despite the harsh criticism of Geoffrey's *Historia* by many English historiographers, Welsh antiquaries, including George Owen of Henllys, George Owen Harry, and Robert Holland — members of the gentry or clergy and based in south-west Wales — continued to defend the British History and its strong connections with Welsh identity.⁴⁹ Their interest in heraldry, history, and pedigrees, activities historically rooted in Welsh culture,⁵⁰ fostered the sentiment of 'being British' through descents that tied not only royalty and the nobility but also the landed gentry to illustrious ancestors of Trojan origin, and to 'a heritage that [...] earned them [the Welsh] a unique position among nations'.⁵¹

A related notion was that the prestigious British blood of the Welsh race had also been preserved in the royal blood of the Tudors, and had thence flowed into the blood of King James VI and I. This is evident in an unpublished work by Owen Harry himself, called *The Well-spring of True Nobilitie*, a tribute to King James. According to the title, the text presented

an ocean of Heroical descents and Royall genealogies of the renowned Kinges, Princes greate states nobilitie and gentry of the famous Ile of Britaine descended of the blood Royall of the ancient Brittaines but principally the Genealogie of the most highe & mighty Monarche our dread Sovereigne James [...] Kinge of Greate Brittainne ffrance and Ireland⁵²

By tracing King James's descent to 'the five kingly races' of Wales and the ancient Britons of Trojan origin, and how they had combined with the Scottish and English lines in the course of the centuries, Owen Harry illustrated James's 'rightful title by lawful descent' to the throne of a unified Britain.⁵³ His *Genealogy* was meant to

⁴⁹ Charles, *George Owen of Henllys*, pp. 99–126.

⁵⁰ They also entertained connections with the College of Arms in London. Jones, 'An Approach to Welsh Genealogy', p. 378.

⁵¹ Jones, 'The Welsh Gentry', p. 632.

⁵² Quoted in Jones, 'George Owen Harry', p. 62.

⁵³ Jones, 'The Welsh Gentry', p. 645.

be an appendix to Robert Holland's Welsh translation of King James's *Basilikon Doron* (1603), a 'mirror for princes' dedicated to his eldest son, Prince Henry. In the preface, Holland explained the importance of Owen Harry's pedigree:

(most dread Sovereign) may this your Highness's pedigree from the ancient Britons seem worthy your gracious aspect, in that as your Majesty is the only head in which British, English, Scottish and Irish nations are united, so, by God his especial providence, is your Majesty descended by law of nature and consanguinity from all four.⁵⁴

The connection between King James's genealogical descent and the blood of Britain's peoples — the Irish descent coming from ancient and mythical kin relations with the Scottish monarchs — is possible because these different genealogical strands all intersect throughout the ages to form a British identity anchored in the immemorial past.

This is why Owen Harry's pedigree, and the College of Arms genealogy with it, highlights mythical ancestors that were not normally considered important in English royal pedigrees. The descendants of Locrine and Camber — the sons who received England and Wales after Brutus's death — are crammed inside two ovals, which then lead to what turn out to be key ancestors in James's British line: Regan, King Leir's second daughter, and Henwyn, Duke of Cornwall, son of King Bledhud. Regan represents Locrine's English line and Henwyn Camber's Welsh line; theirs is thus shown as the first union between the English and Welsh lines, from which subsequent kings of Britain sprang.⁵⁵ The British line is very short if compared to normal royal pedigrees, and an important figure like King Arthur — used in the early Tudor period as a symbol of British (and Anglo-centric) imperial power — is surprisingly absent. The focus is not on the succession of monarchs in time, but on the way in which King James's genealogy naturally blends the mythical Anglo-Welsh and Scottish ancestors by means of consanguinity.

Nothing is said of Albanact, Brutus's son who, according to Geoffrey's *Historia*, received Scotland, and whose land reverted to Locrine after Albanact's death by the hand of Humber, King of the Huns. In order to trace James's Scottish line, Owen Harry relies instead on the alternative national mythography which had developed in Scotland. As early as the fourteenth century, Scottish historiographers such as

⁵⁴ Quoted in Jones, 'George Owen Harry', p. 70.

⁵⁵ Regan and Henwyn (as the Duke of Cornwall) are also famously present in William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which was staged for King James in 1606. Their union in the play is, however, childless.

John of Fordun had begun to dissociate themselves from the British History and the unwanted genealogical, hence political, ties it entailed, invoking instead a different etiology according to which the Scots were descendants not of the Trojans, but of the Greek Gathelus and the Egyptian princess Scota; from them had sprung over a hundred kings of Ireland and Scotland.⁵⁶ Owen Harry accepted the Scottish origin myth and was interested in the way in which it interwove with the British History, and how it came to represent the genealogical and political unity of Britain.⁵⁷ While Owen Harry did not provide the full list of the ancient Scottish kings, our anonymous genealogist added a marginal comment remarking that the Scottish rulers had indeed a different genealogical origin and that they too 'descended in their Princelie Progenie from Noah the First Monarch'.⁵⁸

The first Scottish king mentioned in Owen Harry's and the College of Arms genealogy is, oddly enough, Durstus, who did not hold an important place in other genealogies of King James, nor in medieval and early modern Scottish chronicles. The full story of Durstus first appeared in print in 1527, when Hector Boece published his *Historia gentis Scotorum*. Although based on John of Fordun's fourteenth-century *Chronica gentis Scotorum* and Walter Bower's fifteenth-century *Scotichronicon*, both of which had only mentioned Durstus by name in king lists, Boece's *Historia* claimed to have used an additional, unknown source adding new detail to the chronicles of these mythical predecessors, including the biographies of a few ancient, evil kings. Among them was Durstus, an 'insolent youth' given to 'drounknes and vnbridelit lust', who was

[a] mischeuous ane tyrane, that al ye nobil men (that his fader vsit on his secret counsell) war be him othir slane or banist, Or ellis be feynyeit causis forfaltit of thair landis and guddis. And finalie he wes brocht to sic cruelte, that not onlie he slew yame (quhilk war odius to hym) bot als slew al thaym quhare he beleuit to get ony riches or guddis be thair deith. He repudiat his nobil quene Agasia the kyng of Britonis dochter. And gart his vicious harlotis deforce hir.⁵⁹

After apparently repenting and promising to be lenient towards clan chiefs who had rebelled against him, Durstus organized a banquet at his castle of Berigon, to

⁵⁶ Matthews, 'The Egyptians in Scotland', pp. 289–307.

⁵⁷ Jones, 'The Welsh Gentry', p. 645.

⁵⁸ The missing kings before Durstus are: Fergus, Ferithais, Maynus, Doruidilla, Nathak, Rewtar, Rewtha, Therius, Iosyn, and Fynuane. Boece, *The Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland*, trans. by Bellenden, E2'.

⁵⁹ Boece, *The Hystory and Croniklis of Scotland*, trans. by Bellenden, p. 19'.

seal this newfound harmony; there he had all the guests slaughtered. He was eventually murdered by his people. This tyrant was not forgotten in subsequent years by English chroniclers, featuring as he did in William Harrison's *Description of England* (1587) as part of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, or in the work of Scottish historians like George Buchanan.

Buchanan, tutor to the future King James, published his *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* in 1582. Partly based on material drawn from Boece, Buchanan's history of Scotland devoted some lines to the ancient Scottish kings, including Durstus, who led 'a life of vice'.⁶⁰ Buchanan's treatment of Durstus, and of the other evil kings first discussed by Boece, reflected his own political ideas. He believed that the Scottish monarchy had always been essentially elective, unlike the English one, and that kings should be 'subject to the choice and continuing approval of the people: or rather, of a council of nobles who may correct and, if necessary, depose them'.⁶¹ He proves his point by referring to the tradition of clan chiefs of the Highlands and Islands, adding examples of the sad and deserved fate of kings like Durstus, who were punished for their crimes against their own people.⁶² Buchanan barely acknowledges that Durstus married the daughter of the King of Britain, and does not mention either the king's or the daughter's names. Even as late as 1603, the year of King James's coronation, John Monipennie only mentioned Durstus very briefly in the genealogy of the Scottish kings in his *Certeine Matters Concerning the Realme of Scotland*, as a 'cruell and trayterous Tyrant, slaine by his Nobles in battell, in the ninth yeere of his raigne'.⁶³

As far as English chroniclers are concerned, the stress seems to have been instead on the fact that Durstus married the daughter of the King of Britain, rather than on his tyrannical behaviour. In his *Description of England*, William Harrison wrote that Durstus was handed by his father, the king of Scotland, to the King of Britain, Sicill, to seal through a marriage with Sicill's daughter, Agasia, the Scots' willingness to submit to the King of Britain after a period of prolonged wars. Harrison observed that the Scots hated Durstus for this, even though for this 'they ought rather to haue liked him the better', and eventually killed him and disinherited his children. After an internal war, the line was reinstated, and so, Harrison continued, 'the bloud of the Britons, of the part of the mother, was restored to the crowne of

⁶⁰ Buchanan, *Rerum Scotticarum Historia*, p. 102.

⁶¹ Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, p. 48.

⁶² Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, p. 48.

⁶³ Monipennie, *Certeine Matters*, B2'.

Albania'⁶⁴ — hence the Scottish and British lines were united. We can understand why this episode was not particularly highlighted by pro-Scotland authors; indeed, as Durstus was forced to marry Agasia as a sign of acceptance of the Britons' victory, this could be considered another precedent of Scotland's historical submission to England.

Owen Harry and our genealogist followed this tradition in their interpretation of the Durstus story, in order to highlight not the pre-eminence of England over Scotland, but the shared 'British' blood of Scotland, Wales, and England, running in King James's veins. Moreover, if Regan and Henwyn's was the first union of the English and Welsh lines, both descended from Brutus, that of Durstus and Agasia was to be considered the first union of the Scottish and Anglo-Welsh lines. Although a rather uncommon ancestry, it provides an instance of how mythical ancestors were used to enhance dynastic legitimacy in the complex case of King James. In a poem written in 1611, entitled *Union Jewell*, the English poet Francis Davison listed the monarchs who had united the lines of England (plus Wales) and Scotland. First of all, in this list, is Agasia, '[w]ho first with Durstus it [the Union] began to make'.⁶⁵

King James and Mythical Ancestry

One of the most difficult questions when dealing with mythical ancestry and genealogy is understanding how they were received and interpreted by the people for whom they were created. The case of King James is peculiar as compared to that of other English kings, because he authored several political texts in which he consciously employed not only references to biblical ancestry — as we saw in the first section of this essay — but also to the mythical ancestors of the English, Welsh, and Scots.

King James showed active interest in genealogies, unlike his immediate predecessor. Elizabeth I had taken a passive attitude towards the culture of genealogical celebration — which only highlighted her unmarried and childless status — accepting pedigrees as gifts but never promoting their making or putting them on display. Instead, we know that James I had a court genealogist, Morgan Colman, who was working on 'various genealogical tables [...] for the King's honour and service' as late as 1622.⁶⁶ Records also suggest that the King may have encouraged the public display of pedigree rolls in the state rooms at Whitehall Palace; also, a genealogy of the 'mon-

⁶⁴ Harrison, 'The Description of England', p. 118.

⁶⁵ Davison, *A Poetical Rapsodie*, pp. 203–05.

⁶⁶ King James VI and I, 'James I, Volume 132: August 1622', ed. by Everett Green, pp. 435–45.

archy Brittan' with 'all kings from Brute' may have reached the Emperor of Japan through the East India Company in the mid-1610s.⁶⁷ While some pedigrees only contained historical ancestors and illuminated coats of arms, others embraced biblical, mythical, and historical ancestors of all of James's lines. Like Owen Harry's and the College of Arms genealogies, these pedigrees sought to visualize in genealogical form the legitimacy of James's succession as well as how the political union of England and Scotland advocated by the King was symbolically and naturally grounded in the monarch's kinship to all the peoples and dynasties of his realm.

But how did King James see his own biblical and mythical ancestry and its celebration in genealogical form? A much-quoted (and probably spurious) anecdote reveals both the ironic sharpness of James I alongside the ambivalent attitude that contemporary intellectuals may have had towards such celebrations of lineage. While visiting Lumley Castle, in County Durham, in the late sixteenth century, King James was shown several pedigrees, made of stone and parchment, tracing the descent of the Lumleys via mythical ancestors, down to Adam and Eve and even to God; on seeing them the King allegedly commented: 'By my saul I did na ken [know] that Adam's name was Lumley!'⁶⁸

Nevertheless, in 1610, James gladly accepted as a gift the complex, four-square-metre genealogical table prepared by gentleman antiquary Thomas Lyte, including Noah, Brutus of Troy, King Fergus, the mythical Germanic ancestors of the Saxons, and so on. This was an official event attended also by the heir apparent, Prince Henry, and some of the most powerful members of the aristocracy, including the Earls of Northampton, Salisbury, and Arundel.⁶⁹ Lyte received a royal gift in return: a precious jewel with a portrait of the King, now preserved at the British Museum. Apparently, James also encouraged the printed publication of Lyte's pedigree so that other people could enjoy looking at it; but the copper plates have been lost and there are no extant copies.⁷⁰

Beside the anecdotal and documented attitude of James I towards mythical ancestors, we also possess evidence that, although he may not have seen them as fully historical, he nevertheless understood their potential usefulness in political

⁶⁷ Hunt, Thornton, and Dalgleish suggest this genealogy is a now lost printed version of Thomas Lyte's roll ('A Jacobean Antiquary Reassessed', p. 16); see also Screech, "Pictures (The Most Part Bawdy)", p. 65.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Harris, 'Lines of Descent', p. 89; see also Payne, 'Heraldry and Genealogies', pp. 23–25.

⁶⁹ Hunt, Thornton, and Dalgleish, 'A Jacobean Antiquary Reassessed', p. 5.

⁷⁰ Hunt, Thornton, and Dalgleish, 'A Jacobean Antiquary Reassessed', p. 6.

discourse. Mythical ancestors could indeed encourage their descendants to pursue virtue or even provide specific policies with ancient roots and legitimation grounded in national history.

King James mentioned Brutus of Troy in his *Basilikon Doron* (1603), a ‘mirror for princes’ addressed to Prince Henry:

in case it please God to provide you to all these three Kingdomes, make your eldest sonne *Isaac*, leauing him all your kingdoms; and provide the rest with priuate possessions: Otherwayes by deuiding your kingdoms, yee shall leaue the seed of diuision and discord among your posteritie; as befell to this Ile, by the diuision and assignment thereof, to the three sonnes of *Brutus*, *Locrine*, *Albanact*, and *Camber*.⁷¹

The reference is to the primordial division of Britain, upon Brutus’s death, into the three realms of England, Scotland, and Wales, the politico-genealogical implications of which were discussed in the previous section of this essay. This division stands as a negative model of governance which Prince Henry must avoid, should he come to inherit the united kingdom of Britain resulting from James’s accession to the throne of England.

The marginal note to the passage explains that the reference to Brutus was drawn from Polydore Vergil’s *Anglica Historia* (1513–1534), a classic, scholarly piece of criticism of the British History. However, Polydore’s text did not say that Brutus himself had divided the kingdom, but that his sons had done so after his death, as narrated in the original source — Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia*. Maybe King James was not familiar with the story?⁷² Manuscript annotations (not in James’s hand) to the *Basilikon Doron*, explain the meaning of James’s passage at length:

all be diuision and discord thee seeds whairof being layid in be such partition did so terribly spoile the foundatiouns of the comon weill that it rywed asunder thee monarchie and diuyding it in partes broght the holl [...] to miserable desolatioun⁷³

That Brutus’s partition was marked as the ‘seed’ of future discord and political division — as said in the notes and in *Basilikon Doron* — proves that what King James had in mind was not a confused idea of Geoffrey’s story but a different interpretation of Brutus’s division. This was influenced by the late medieval and early modern textual transmission of the story, whereby Brutus had gradually become

⁷¹ King James VI and I, *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. by Craigie, I, pp. 135–37.

⁷² King James VI and I, *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. by Craigie, II, p. 104.

⁷³ King James VI and I, *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. by Craigie, II, p. 309.

the misguided author of the division. While inserting a reference to Polydore Vergil as a marker of antiquarian consciousness, King James was meanwhile manipulating the story for his own political purposes, as a negative exemplum of governance; this is confirmed by the fact that the passage was absent in the 1598 and 1599 versions of *Basilikon Doron*, both published in Scotland.⁷⁴ It only appeared in the 1603 edition, revised and published in London upon James's coronation as king of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. The alteration was therefore made for his English and Welsh readers — including Owen Harry and our anonymous genealogist — to whom Brutus's story was familiar and culturally meaningful.

But *Basilikon Doron* also illustrates the same kind of syncretism of biblical and mythical ancestry featuring in some royal pedigrees of the time. In the text, Brutus's division is presented as a violation of inheritance by primogeniture, which reflects the genealogical interpretation of Britain's origin myth discussed in the previous section of this essay. In the Protestant style, James brings together biblical allegory and national history. Referring to Abraham and Isaac in the discussion of patriarchal primogeniture was by then common practice, as Abraham famously left 'all his goods' to Isaac, but gave 'gifts' to 'the sonnes of the concubines' (Genesis 15. 5–6). The 1560 Geneva Bible glosses clarify the extent of Abraham's legacy: he gave Isaac 'all that he had' so as 'to auoyde the dissension that els might haue come because of the heritage'. Edward Wilkinson's *Isahacs Inheritance* (1603), dedicated to James, reprised this topos of primogeniture, as Brutus was blamed for not yielding to Lochrine's seniority, thus causing long-term political instability.⁷⁵ Instead, King James, typologically hailed as a 'second Brute', had finally reunited Britain and come to redress and further prevent the mistake of division.⁷⁶

That King James was fully knowledgeable in the etiological narratives of his kingdom(s), and that he manipulated them for political uses, is also demonstrated by a reference to the mythical Scottish kings in his *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598; 1603), the first edition of which was addressed to a Scottish audience. Here, James employed the fabulous King Fergus, first monarch of the Scots, to support his views of monarchical power:

For as our [of the Scots] Chronicles beare witnesse, this Ile, and especially our part of it [Scotland], being scantly inhabited, but by very few, and they as barbarous and scant of ciuilitie, as number, there comes our first King *Fergus*, with a great number

⁷⁴ King James VI and I, *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. by Craigie, I, pp. 136–37.

⁷⁵ Wilkinson, *Isahacs Inheritance*, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Munday, *The Triumphes of Re-United Britannia*, B2^r–B3^v.

with him, out of *Ireland*, which was long inhabited before vs, and making himself master of the countrey, by his owne friendship, and force, as well of the *Irelandmen* that came with him, as of the countrey-men that willingly fell to him, hee made himselfe King and Lord, as well of the whole landes, as of the whole inhabitants within the same. Thereafter he and his successours, a long while after their being Kinges, made and established their lawes from time to time, and as the occasion required.⁷⁷

With a strained interpretation, King James presents Fergus as an historical figure who had lived at the time of Alexander the Great, and whose actions originated the Scottish monarchs' absolutist power over the making of the law, as well as their right to overrule parliamentary decisions. Hence, mythical ancestry provided the prestige and legitimization of absolutist power and lineage through antiquity.

James was clearly quite keen on Scottish chronicles including mythical ancestors — he had a copy of Boece's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* (1527) in his library. He had even celebrated his own descent from King Fergus in a sonnet written for Anne of Denmark before their marriage, where he described himself as a 'happie monarch sprung of Fergus race'.⁷⁸ Overall, King James seems to have preferred his Scottish over his British ancestry. This was possibly due, as shown above, to the ambivalent exemplary role played by Brutus in the political history of the island, but also to James's perception of the British etiological story as fundamentally 'alien' to his Scottish identity. Although obliged to engage with the British History, which was an omnipresent theme in Anglo-Welsh poems, pageants, and pedigrees devised for his coronation, King James never expressed any positive opinion of that ancestry.

Conclusion

The anonymous genealogical roll preserved at the College of Arms is a unique document which provides new evidence on the uses of biblical and mythical ancestry in early modern genealogical practice. The political rhetoric of the roll is heavily reliant on the British History and the genealogies of the Sacred Scriptures, and employs mythical genealogy as a historiographic principle of nationalism. But it also translates the genealogical organization of biblical and mythical ancestry onto the

⁷⁷ King James VI and I, 'The True Law of Free Monarchies', ed. by Sommerville, p. 73.

⁷⁸ King James VI and I, *New Poems by James I of England*, ed. by Westcott, p. 3 ('To the Queene, Anonimos', l. 9).

plane of exemplarity and even typology, as it celebrates James VI and I's accession according to a royalist, providential, nationalistic, and Protestant view of history.

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MYTHICAL ANCESTRY, GENEALOGY, AND NATIONALISM IN EIGHTEENTH- AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE

Roberto Bizzocchi and Erminia Irace

Mythical Ancestry and the Enlightenment

In the first volume of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published in 1776, Edward Gibbon criticized the way in which historiographers traced the descent of peoples and nations from fabulous ancestors:

The last century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and easy faith, who, by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great grandchildren of Noah from the Tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe.¹

Gibbon's criticism was specifically addressed to *Atlantica* (*Atland eller Manheim*), a four-volume treatise written between 1679 and 1702 by Olaus Rudbeck, a Swedish scholar and Rector of the University of Uppsala. In *Atlantica* Rudbeck claimed that Sweden was the lost Atlantis, the cradle of civilization, and that Swedish was the language of Adam, from which Latin and Hebrew had later developed. Gibbon's argumentative stance against Rudbeck surfaces in the following passage:

¹ Essay translated by Sara Trevisan. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 256.

Roberto Bizzocchi, Professor of History, Università di Pisa

Erminia Irace, Associate Professor of History, Università di Perugia

Mythical Ancestry in World Cultures, 1400–1800, ed. by Sara Trevisan, CURSOR 35 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 165–190.

Whatever is celebrated either in history or fable, this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves derived their alphabetical characters, their astronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for such it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, and even the Elysian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime so profusely favored by Nature could not long remain desert after the flood.²

It is not just a mere coincidence that these lines — and the ironic tone of the following passages concerned with Askenaz, son of Gomer, son of Japhet, and father of the Swedes — should evoke Voltaire's style. Indeed, Gibbon's passage is reminiscent of, and possibly a direct allusion to, the famous controversy with which Voltaire had introduced his *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand* (1759) — the manifesto of a new historical method opposing a traditional historiography still heavily reliant on origin myths. Here the victim of Voltaire's sarcasm was Joseph de Guignes, one of the most important eighteenth-century scholars of Oriental cultures, who had recently presented his *Mémoire dans lequel on prouve, que les Chinois sont une colonie égyptienne* at the Académie Royale in Paris. In the *Histoire*, Voltaire's irony against de Guignes's account of the Chinese descendants of the Egyptian Pharaohs, sprang from his fundamental mistrust of the traditional claims made by most European and non-European ruling dynasties and foundational figures. For instance, the Franks and the French kings were said to be descended from the Trojans,³ Muhammad from Abraham and Agar, the Russian tsars from Bela, Attila, and Japhet, and so on. Almost as if anticipating the opinion of Gibbon's 'antiquarians of profound learning', Voltaire reached the following conclusion: 'Quantité de graves personnages ont suivi exactement ces filiations, avec la même sagacité qu'ils ont découvert comment les Japonais avaient peuplé le Pérou. L'histoire a été longtemps écrite dans ce goût' ('A number of grave writers have traced these filiations with as much exactness, and with the same sagacity, as they discovered in what manner the Japanese came to people the kingdom of Peru. This was long the taste of modern historians').⁴

² Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 256. See also Rubel, *Savage and Barbarian*, p. 107 n. 8, and Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, iv, pp. 19–20.

³ For further discussion on the Trojan descent of the French kings, see Ewa Kociszewska's essay in the present volume.

⁴ Voltaire, *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, ed. by Mervaud, pp. 391–95; Voltaire, *The History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great*, p. xii.

In these texts Voltaire's and Gibbon's works agree on two key issues. First, in arguing against the mythical reconstruction of the ancient past, as typical of the critical historiographers of the Enlightenment, both Voltaire and Gibbon knew that such a reconstruction involved the idea of a homogeneous framework in the search of the origins of humankind. This means that, according to Voltaire and Gibbon, genealogy in the form of family trees could not be disjoined from broader genealogical narratives which recounted the descent of peoples from eponymous forefathers, themselves the founders of a geographical territory whose inviolable identity was a sacred legacy of history. Second, both Voltaire and Gibbon were perhaps too hasty in their eagerness to dismiss once and for all a historiographical tradition which had already led to too many errors and irrational reconstructions.

In fact, in this concluding chapter devoted to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European culture, we should avoid employing Voltaire's and Gibbon's stance on the subject. While it would be ingenuous to accept the rationalism of the European Enlightenment as an unquestionable heuristic instrument, it would also be a mistake to believe that historical discourse based on origin myths was just a dying tradition parodied by eighteenth-century scholars. Despite the criticism of *philosophes* like Voltaire and Gibbon, history continued nevertheless to be 'écrite dans ce goût'. The present essay is thus concerned with what, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, was at the same time the survival, continuation, renewal, and rebirth of mythical ancestry.

Vico and the Historiography of National Origins

An interesting and not unrelated premise to the discussion of mythical ancestry in Europe is the history of genealogical practice in the English colonies and, later, the United States of America — a practice which developed and gradually departed from its European counterpart.⁵ In the decades following the American Revolution and the independence from Britain, the genealogical culture which colonists had imported from Europe underwent a process of 'Americanization'. In the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, the search for one's ancestors in the American colonies was mainly undertaken in order to strengthen the democratic and republican identity of the new nation. However, after the Civil War, the nascent solidarity between former enemies was encour-

⁵ For a recent and insightful book on genealogical practice in the United States, see Weil, *Family Trees*.

aged, among other factors, by the new notion of a genealogical 'nobility' imbued with racist pride and rooted in the belief that white Americans were superior to African-Americans. While this trend would be marginalized in the years following the Second World War, it was between the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century that American historical and genealogical culture turned reactionary. Genealogical trees were used to confirm the genetic purity of the descendants of Germanic warriors who had successfully invaded Britain in the fifth century, defeated the Britons and Celts, and created the Anglo-Saxon race. These descendants were members of an elect nation, and their genealogical trees were proof of the fact that the United States — in the words of political scientist John W. Burgess — 'must be regarded as a Teutonic national state'.⁶

If this was the case in the country *par excellence* of equality, future, and progress, it is unsurprising to discover that a similar process had already taken place in Europe, despite the battles for Reason, the Revolution, and the advent of democracy. In fact, just when Voltaire and Gibbon were seeking to dismiss once and for all this much criticized historiographical practice, the discourse of mythical ancestry was instead becoming increasingly important in the historical construction of nationalism.

The relationship between mythical genealogy and nationalism is not a secondary element in the elaboration of the historical culture of Romanticism between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Debates on national identity were not, of course, a complete novelty, as shown by scholars who have reject the concepts of 'invented tradition' and nations as 'imagined communities' theorized by Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson.⁷ Indeed, already in the medieval period European peoples had begun to shape their own national identity around specific cultural and political elements: a shared mythical and epic memory, a single ruling dynasty, and the sacred legitimation of their role as an 'elect people'. It is therefore proved that modern nations did not suddenly appear around the mid-eighteenth century.⁸ Nevertheless, the ethnic and racial implications and the strong emotions which Romantic culture associated with the concept of nation turned the idea of national identity into something profoundly different to what it had been in the medieval and early modern periods. As the present essay will show, this new concept of nation, which would enhance mass participation in political life after the Revolution, did not discard but, rather, strengthened the importance of

⁶ Quoted in Weil, *Family Trees*, p. 128.

⁷ Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition*; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁸ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*; Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*.

genealogical discourse — both in the form of histories of peoples and family trees — which appeared so obsolete to Voltaire and Gibbon.

In order to understand the importance and diffusion of this phenomenon, we must first understand how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalist discourse departed from its medieval and early modern counterparts. In a seminal essay, Werner Kaegi explained how Voltaire's thought was central to the undoing of the Christian conception of history — the unified and coherent vision of universal history as the 'history of Salvation' — dating back to St Jerome and St Augustine, but still dominant in the seventeenth century, for instance, in Bossuet's *Discours* (1681). Voltaire's criticism of the Christian conception of history was based on rational arguments concerning the indefensibility of biblical chronology and the inadequacy of the geographical framework of the Bible, so centred around Mediterranean territories, against the proven evidence of a vaster world.⁹ In the absence of a secular periodization and a basic structure for the definition of historical epochs, both of which would be introduced by Voltaire, the historicism of nineteenth-century Europe would not have developed.

Just as important, however, is the work of Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico, especially his masterpiece *Principj di scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni*, published first in 1725 and in its final version in 1744. In a conference paper delivered in 1975, entitled 'Vico, Voltaire and the Beginnings of Cultural History', Isaiah Berlin argued that the innovative turn of modern historiography was due not so much to Voltaire's destructive criticism, seeking to use history as a moral example and instrument of ideological debate, but to Vico's constructive view of history. Vico 'discovered' the sense of historical development, and formulated the modern understanding of the concept of anachronism, because he showed that human nature is not fixed — as suggested by theologians and jusnaturalists — but ever-moving.¹⁰

Furthermore, it was Vico who encouraged, even before Voltaire, a substantial undoing of the Christian view of history. While, due to the suspicions of the Inquisition, Vico continued to show his adherence to Catholic orthodoxy, he rejected the universalism of the history of Salvation. In his *Scienza nuova*, the history of the Jewish people has a marginal role, while greater attention is paid to the history of the gentiles, to which, however, the often invoked divine Providence remains alien and indifferent. Although the Chronological Table included in Vico's work may be reminiscent of the Christian *Chronicon* of Eusebius/St Jerome,

⁹ Kaegi, 'Voltaire und der Zerfall des christlichen Geschichtsbildes'.

¹⁰ Berlin, 'Vico, Voltaire and the Beginnings of Cultural History'.

the absence of Christ's Incarnation in this schematic periodization provides clear evidence of Vico's agenda. Vico sought to reconstruct the dynamics of the civilizing process in various societies, showing how in each of them the process as such, and the role played by religion, had been similar yet independent. Vico's radical innovation was twofold. First, he provided an historical periodization of the development of humankind, divided into phases and beginning from the state of nature. Second, he conceived the history of humankind as a diverse, not a unified, subject, and described it as a history of different nations, following an indistinct phase of 'brutish wandering'. Vico has thus been justly called a polygenist, because, despite his criticism of La Peyrère's *Preadamitae*,¹¹ he argued that each nation had undergone its own individual progress in terms of civilization and religious culture.¹²

These ideas are essential to understand the importance of mythical ancestry in European nationalism between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Vico proposed an historical reconstruction of origins in which etymology played a key role; so, while Voltaire rejected myth, Vico sought to examine it. Vico also envisaged a philosophy of the history of individual nations which would reach beyond the universalistic view of the Enlightenment, and which would provide an alternative take to medieval and early modern notions of national identity based on the Christian history of Salvation and the biblical tradition. It is therefore through Vico's theories that we should understand later debates on the mythical and genealogical origins of nations.

While paving the way for the modern historical anthropology of the ancient world and to the socio-cultural history of civilizations, Vico was not responsible, of course, for later transformations of some aspects of these theories into a means of exalting individual nations on the basis of their civilizing mission and supremacy. Vico's willingness to interpret myths, rather than dismiss them, did not mean that he sought to turn them into objective data sufficient to prove a legitimate ancestry rooted in remote times. However, his theories offered a serious alternative to Voltaire's criticism. The contrasting nature of Vico's and Voltaire's theories can be appreciated in the following passages.

The first comes from Voltaire's *Fragment sur l'histoire générale*, connected with the *Essai sur les mœurs*:

¹¹ *Preadamitae* is a work published in 1655, in which the French philosopher Isaac La Peyrère claimed that the world had been populated by human beings since before the time of Adam.

¹² For further discussion see Landucci, *I filosofi e i selvaggi 1580–1780*, pp. 273–332, and Cristofolini, *Vico pagano e barbaro*.

En vain nous trouvions par toutes les médailles des vestiges d'anciennes fêtes célébrées en l'honneur des fables; des temples érigés en leur mémoire; elles n'en étaient pas moins fables [...] Les amateurs du merveilleux disaient: 'Il faut bien que ces faits soient vrais, puisque tant de monuments en sont la preuve'. Et nous disions: 'Il faut bien qu'ils soient faux, puisque le vulgaire les a crus'.¹³

(In vain do we find in all coins the remnants of ancient feasts celebrated in honour of fables; temples erected in their memory; they were no less fables [...] Those who love the marvellous say: 'These facts must needs be true, as there are such monuments to prove it'. And we say: 'It must needs that they be false, as common people have believed in them'.)

The second is drawn from Vico's *Scienza nuova*:

Sciché l'ordine del Toson d'oro è una medaglia eroica del tempo di Ercole scitico, che nel Settentrione si parlava con imprese eroiche [...] La quale impresa eroica dimostra che i primi fondatori dell'augustissima casa discesero dalla Scandinavia e fin da quel tempo erano signori sovrani di terre colte, ed avevano ragione libera di predar greggi dagli stranieri, che, come si è pur sopra dimostro, da prima furono perpetui nemici; e, in conseguenza, che l'augustissima casa d'Austria gode una perpetuità di quattromil'anni di sovrana signoria.¹⁴

(Hence the emblem of the Order of the Golden Fleece is a heroic medal from the times of the Scythian Hercules when, in the north, they spoke in heroic emblems [...] The heroic emblem of the Golden Fleece thus demonstrates that the first founders of the most august house of Austria descended from Scandinavia, after which they became the sovereign lords of cultivated lands, with the free right to plunder the flocks of the strangers who were at first their perpetual enemies, as we saw earlier; and, consequently, that the most august house of Austria has enjoyed a continuous period of four thousand years of sovereign lordship.)¹⁵

Regarding the falseness of popular beliefs, Vico provides a sharp alternative to Voltaire's ideas: 'Le tradizioni volgari devon'aver avuto pubblici motivi di vero, onde nacquero, e si conservarono da intieri popoli per lunghi spazj di tempi' ('Vulgar traditions must have had public grounds of truth, by virtue of which they came into being and were preserved by entire peoples over long periods of time').¹⁶

¹³ Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, II, p. 952.

¹⁴ Vico, *La Scienza Nuova*, ed. by Sanna and Vitiello, p. 241 (ed. 1725, book III, par. 32).

¹⁵ Vico, *The First New Science*, ed. by Pompa, pp. 196–97.

¹⁶ Vico, *La Scienza Nuova*, ed. by Sanna and Vitiello, p. 862 (ed. 1744, book I, 'Degli Elementi', xvi); Vico, *The New Science*, ed. by Bergin and Fish, p. 64.

Although the knowledge of Vico's theories was not totally widespread until Michelet's French translation of 1827, their sphere of influence, which is of course hardly comparable to Voltaire's, was not as limited as one might think. In eighteenth-century Italy, debates on Vico's theories were important, as epitomized by Vincenzo Cuoco's *Platone in Italia*, published in 1806, which was strongly influenced by Vico's *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia* (1710) and the *Scienza nuova*. Vico's influence on European culture was similarly substantial,¹⁷ especially on what he called 'la scoperta del vero Omero' ('the discovery of the true Homer').

National Epic and the Myth of Primeval Ancestry

Vico's interpretation of Homer as the soul of the Greek people — not so much as an individual person but as the 'heroic character' of Greek men, who put their deeds into song¹⁸ — played a key role in the history of the 'Homeric question'. It anticipated Friedrich August Wolf's *Prolegomena* (1795) and possibly influenced, through the 1730 edition of the *Scienza nuova*, Thomas Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735).¹⁹ For the present essay, Vico's interpretation of Homer acquires even greater importance in that it paved the way for the successful Romantic figure of the national bard, the genuine incarnation of the spirit of a people.

Like Vico, Blackwell argued that historical reality was characterized by continuous motion — a cyclical process which he called the 'Progression of Manners'. Like Vico and other intellectuals involved in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Blackwell attached a positive value to the most ancient period of human history, which, in the Greek world, went from 'the dark Ages, of which they had little or no Knowledge, to the time of the Trojan War'.²⁰ Primitive peoples, including the Greeks, were poets by nature and the creators of one of the most important literary genres: epic poetry. Poetry and the poetic language through which it was expressed were therefore seen as powerful evidence of the generative spontaneity of humankind in its primeval state. But, according to Blackwell, Homeric poetry was not the collective creation of a people. Unlike Vico, Blackwell believed that Homer had existed, as a travelling bard. Homer had orally composed the *Iliad* and the

¹⁷ Costa, *Vico e l'Europa*; see Leersen, 'The Rise of Philology'.

¹⁸ Vico, *La Scienza Nuova*, ed. by Sanna and Vitiello, p. 689 (ed. 1730, book III, n. 377).

¹⁹ Costa, 'Thomas Blackwell fra Gravina e Vico'.

²⁰ Costa, 'Thomas Blackwell fra Gravina e Vico', pp. 44–45.

Odyssey, which would only be recorded in writing long after his death. Blackwell's view, which was not a complete novelty, led nevertheless to new interpretative models: Homer's poetry had to be studied within the historical, political, and social context in which it had developed,²¹ and his texts were to be treated as historical sources.

Blackwell's influential *Enquiry* encouraged the development of international debates on Homer, who became the most discussed author in eighteenth-century Europe.²² His theories found fertile ground particularly in Scotland, at the University of Aberdeen, where Blackwell taught for a long time, and where James Macpherson was a student between 1752 and 1755.²³ Blackwell's interpretations of Homeric poetry were a source of inspiration to Macpherson, who used Homer as a model for the bard Ossian and the poetic cycle he allegedly composed.²⁴ The story is renowned, and we will just summarize its most important stages. Between 1760 and 1763, Macpherson published three poetic anthologies (*Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, *Fingal*, and *Temora*) on the deeds of the Caledonians, a people of Celtic origins who had settled in the Scottish Highlands in ancient times. The edition of these texts was accompanied by critical essays composed by Macpherson himself and by his main collaborator, Hugh Blair, in which the poems were used as primary sources to reconstruct the history of the Caledonians. In 1765 Macpherson re-published the poems and essays as *The Works of Ossian*.²⁵

The protagonists of these texts were the ancient Caledonians — described as the direct ancestors of the modern Highlanders — and, more specifically, the bard Ossian. Macpherson claimed to have discovered and translated from Gaelic into English texts authored by a blind poet called Ossian, the son of war chief Fingal. Ossian was the pivotal point of two lines of descent — that of his family and that of his people — and was as such described as 'the last of the race of Fingal'.²⁶ The national imaginary of the Caledonians, like that of every nation, was thus structured around the mythical memory of origins, and, due to its very nature, organized in genealogical form.²⁷ The description of Ossian as the last descendant of his

²¹ Simonsuuri, *Homer's Original Genius*, pp. 99–107; Ferreri, *La questione omerica*, pp. 201–06.

²² Fumaroli, 'Les abeilles et les araignées', pp. 196–218.

²³ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, pp. 24–37.

²⁴ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 86.

²⁵ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, pp. 96–151; Haugen, 'Ossian and the Invention of Textual History'; 'Primary Ossianic Texts', pp. xviii–xix.

²⁶ [Macpherson], *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, p. 37.

²⁷ Burguière, 'L'historiographie des origines de la France', p. 42.

family and of his people was therefore a narrative device highlighting the strong bond between the two genealogical models. This bond was actually present in the Highland tradition, where ‘many Clans could trace their forefathers back to one of great Celtic heroes’; and the transmission of this historical memory was the responsibility of the bards.²⁸ Thanks to its schematic structure, the association of family and national genealogy became influential. For instance, Melchiorre Cesarotti, who translated Ossian’s poetry into Italian as *Poesie di Ossian antico poeta celtico* (1807), included in his volume a drawing of the genealogical tree of Ossian’s family as a guideline to the narrative.²⁹ But Macpherson’s was not the only enterprise of this kind. In 1792, William Owen, a bold inventor of linguistic mythologies, had published an edition of poems attributed to Llywarç Hen, ‘prince of the Cumbrian Britons’. The introduction to the volume featured a genealogical tree of the poet’s family, which descended from an ancient royal line; as in the songs of Ossian, Llywarç Hen’s verse presented the deeds of his people and his family as one.³⁰

In Macpherson’s Ossianic texts, references to Homer were not limited to the invocation of his figure as a blind bard; direct quotations from Homeric poems were in fact numerous and often literal (incidentally, Macpherson would translate the *Iliad* into English in 1773).³¹ The whole discussion of the Ossianic textual tradition as argued by Macpherson and Blair reflected contemporary debates on the Homeric question. Ossian had allegedly composed in oral form ‘a great original’, that is, a unified, well-structured poem later transmitted, albeit in fragmentary form, through an oral bardic tradition. This tradition had remained uninterrupted through the ages thanks to the long-lasting geographical and political isolation of the Highlands.³² The faithfulness of the textual transmission was of fundamental importance: ‘free of intermixture with foreigners’, the Caledonians had maintained a ‘language [...] pure and original’, while their manners were ‘those of an antient [*sic*] and unmixed race of men’.³³ It was only in the medieval period, Macpherson maintained, that some of Ossian’s poems had been collected and transcribed by

²⁸ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, pp. 12–13.

²⁹ *Poesie di Ossian antico poeta celtico*, ed. by Cesarotti, I, p. 62.

³⁰ *The Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces of Llywarç Hen*, ed. by Owen, p. vii. See Morgan, ‘From a Death to a View’, pp. 72–73. On the unitary theory of the ‘Celts-Scythian paradigm’, which was still accepted in eighteenth-century Britain, see Kidd, *British Identities*, pp. 185–210.

³¹ See Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, pp. 85, 137.

³² Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 86.

³³ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 153.

Irish monks, a process that led to the partial alteration of the original language. These corrupted manuscripts, which Macpherson had allegedly found, confirmed, although indirectly, the ancient origin and authority of the Ossianic corpus.

Macpherson was not a solitary scholar; besides Blair, he was also in touch with various intellectuals of the Scottish Enlightenment (such as Adam Ferguson), who, in turn, had elaborated complex philosophical theories concerning the development of human history. When the Ossian phenomenon became widespread on the continent in the late eighteenth century, leading to strong debates on the authenticity of these poems, Scottish and English scholars joined these discussions comparing Ossian to Homer.³⁴ To some Scottish intellectuals, Macpherson's operation was an extremely important event, which resembled the so-called 'sudden findings' often mentioned in traditional genealogical discourse. The 'sudden finding' was an ancient topos of classical and Judaeo-Christian origins, featuring the accidental appearance of an authoritative text providing the confirmation of some important truth.³⁵ In our case, Ossian's poetry had emerged just in time to confirm the philosophical vision of Scottish scholars, supporting a development by stages of human history. Macpherson himself provided the best formulation of this theory, which presented three stages in human society. 'The first', Macpherson wrote, 'is the result of consanguinity, and the natural affection of the members of a family to one another'. This was the historical time in which Ossian and his Highland heroes lived, a time of noble feelings toward one's nation and family. 'The second', Macpherson continued, 'begins when property is established, and men enter into associations for mutual defence, against the invasions and injustice of neighbours'. It was in this barbarous and decadent epoch, when Homer lived, that the Trojan war took place. The third and final stage, Macpherson concluded, was that of civilization, when human beings, subject to laws and governments, had 'leisure to cultivate the mind, and to restore it, through reflection, to a *primaeval dignity of sentiment*'.³⁶ The epoch of civilization — in which Macpherson, his Scottish colleagues, and their readers were living — marked the completion of historical development. The profound significance of the contemporary age therefore lay in a more refined and sensitive return to the spirit of the origins. This notion of human progress was remote from that formulated by Voltaire, and possibly closer

³⁴ Rubel, *Savage and Barbarian*, pp. 39–69, 81–101.

³⁵ See Speyer, *Bücherfunde in der Glaubenswerbung der Antike*; Droixhe, 'Le primitivisme linguistique de Turgot', p. 79; Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili*, pp. 194–201.

³⁶ [Macpherson], 'A Dissertation', ed. by Macpherson, p. xii (our italics). See Rubel, *Savage and Barbarian*, p. 34; Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 45–131.

to Vico's. In this context, the 'great original' composed by Ossian and transmitted by the bards of the Highlands took on the value of a real historical document, just like Homer's poems. Hugh Blair defined Ossian's poems as 'rare documents from an early period of man's history', and stated that their antiquity was confirmed by their stratified textual tradition ('Tradition, in the country where they were written, refers them to an aera of the most remote antiquity').³⁷ David Hume called Ossian's verse 'a monument', only to redress his appreciation upon realizing that it was a forgery concocted by Macpherson.³⁸

Macpherson 'composed' Ossian's poems on the basis of ancient Gaelic ballads, which had been circulating widely in early eighteenth-century Jacobite circles in Scotland. In order to create a unifying element that would bring these poems together, Macpherson invented the authorial figure of Ossian. The ultimate purpose of this enterprise was an explicitly patriotic act: the defence of the Scottish historical and cultural identity, which had been endangered by the Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland in 1707 and by the ultimate defeat of the Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden (1745).³⁹ The fame achieved by the poems and the long-lasting debates on their authenticity led to further developments reaching beyond the boundaries of Scotland.

'Linguistic Primitivism' or the Genealogy of Mother Tongues

One of the most important element in Macpherson and Blair's Ossianic operation was the notion of language as a fundamental element of Scottish cultural identity. The poems attributed to Ossian by Macpherson were composed in ancient Gaelic, the original language of the Highlands, not to be confused with its later medieval variants spoken in Ireland. In the following centuries, the oral transmission of this verse had remained so fundamentally faithful to the original that its meaning was still understood by the eighteenth-century bards who had preserved it. Linguistic continuity was thus a fundamental aspect of Scottish national identity. Macpherson and Blair's attention to the function of language joined a debate on linguistic traditions which had been ongoing for centuries among European literary authors and scholars.⁴⁰ Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this theory acquired

³⁷ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 98.

³⁸ Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 115.

³⁹ Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics*.

⁴⁰ See Droixhe, *L'étymon des dieux*; Burke, 'Nationalism and Vernaculars, 1500–1800'.

new configurations. The 'genealogical' continuity of a language, that is, the possibility of reconstructing its several stages since its most ancient origins, became an increasingly important element for the legitimization of national identities, together with the study of history, myths, customs, traditions, and religions. It is in the context of this bond between the study of languages and the construction of national identities that techniques borrowed from genealogical practice were employed.

In 1770, Thomas Percy — a bishop, scholar, and great admirer of Ossian — published *Northern Antiquities*, an English translation of two French works by Paul Henri Mallet, a Swiss scholar who taught *Belles lettres* at the University of Copenhagen.⁴¹ In his *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc* (1755) and *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes* (1766), Mallet introduced the international public to Snorri's *Edda*, a thirteenth-century treatise in Norse which until then had been known in its entirety only in the Scandinavian world. Mallet translated the *Edda* into French, adding a long introduction in which he reconstructed Danish history in light of this source. A follower of Montesquieu's theories, Mallet sought to demonstrate that the Danish were one of the most ancient peoples in Europe, and that, thanks to its uninterrupted continuity of climate, history, traditions, and customs since antiquity, Denmark was to be considered the original homeland of liberty.⁴² The way in which Percy elaborated on Mallet's books is particularly interesting. Percy did not just translate Mallet's books; he also added a preface where he contextualized the history of Denmark narrated by Mallet within the scenario of European history. According to Percy, Ossian's poems and the *Edda* provided the most important testimonies of two 'mother tongues' — the Gaelic and the Gothic, also called Teutonic; from them different linguistic branches had derived, now spoken by Central and Western European peoples. Although some details were still uncertain, Percy stated that Europe descended from 'two very different peoples, very unlike in their manners, customs, religion and laws'. This subdivision did not consider either southern, eastern, or central Europe. For the sake of clarity, Percy included in his preface a 'short genealogical table', in which the diagram of the family tree was used to describe the branches of the languages and peoples of Europe — or rather, of the part of Europe he was interested in.⁴³

⁴¹ Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*.

⁴² Wood, *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 41–45.

⁴³ [Percy], 'Translator's Preface', pp. iv, xxiv–xxv. On nineteenth-century theories opposing Celtic and Germanic cultures from a biological and racial standpoint, and inspired by research in the natural sciences and by linguistic studies, see Kidd, *British Identities*, pp. 187–89, 207–09, and Bonfante, 'Ideas on the Kinship of the European Languages'.

The nature of linguistic kin ties and lines of descent had been a subject of study since the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ Percy's views were therefore not a novelty. Nevertheless, he sought to present what he thought were the best scientific results to date, highlighting at the same time the danger inherent in the excessive use of etymology as a heuristic instrument.⁴⁵ By contributing to the familiarization of the international public with the culture of northern peoples and their literary legacy, Percy's and Mallet's works show how, by the end of the eighteenth century, the application of genealogical practice to linguistic studies provided a useful research strand encouraging the examination of languages as products and reflections of national civilizations. This research which, as we have seen, had elicited the interest of British scholars in the Enlightenment, became one of the most important subjects of study in German scholarship, being discussed in works published between 1772 and 1791 by one of the greatest philosophers of the time, Johann Gottfried Herder.

In his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (*Treatise on the Origin of Language*) and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*), Herder distanced himself from the universalism of the Enlightenment, focusing instead on 'national character' (*Volksgeist*). This, he thought, could be found in all peoples, because the nation, like the family, should be considered 'the fundamental unit in world history'.⁴⁶ At the same time, the *Volksgeist* of a people was specific and distinguishable; hence all nations were equally worthy and relevant. The essence of national character, Herder thought, was to be found in poetry and language, rather than history. This view of language as an instrument for the definition of national character was successful in the German Empire, made of territories traditionally divided by political and religious fights. More generally, Herder 'gave a voice to all those non-dominant ethnic groups of Central, East Central and Eastern Europe, which, during the long nineteenth century, were keen to establish their own nation-state'.⁴⁷ These ideas fostered the study of 'language as indicator of common historical origins, often ranging back to the middle ages'⁴⁸ — a cultural circumstance which was becoming increasingly favourable for 'inventions of traditions'. For instance, in 1817, Bohemian poet Václav Hanka allegedly discovered, inside the organ of an old church, some thirteenth-century manuscripts containing verse written in an ancient

⁴⁴ See Van Hal, 'Linguistics "ante litteram"', pp. 37–54.

⁴⁵ [Percy], 'Translator's Preface', pp. xx–xxiii.

⁴⁶ Berger, 'The Invention of European National Traditions', pp. 23–24.

⁴⁷ Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts', p. 24.

⁴⁸ Berger, 'The Power of National Pasts', p. 24.

Slavonic language. Hanka published them straight away, eliciting the enthusiasm of his fellow countrymen and providing a strong contribution to the formation of the modern identity of Bohemia. It was only after a decade that this manuscript verse was revealed to be a forgery skillfully made by Hanka himself.⁴⁹

The recourse to a consolidated stereotype of family genealogies was not an isolated instance. The 'sudden finding' tradition was only the most evident symptom of a wider phenomenon: that is, the intensive use of genealogies in the construction of national 'imagined communities'. Evidence of this can be found in Romania, a country that did not have a unified political configuration in the *ancien régime*, since it was split into several states, including the Ottoman Empire ruling over Moldavia and Walachia. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some noble families from these two territories devoted much effort to tracing genealogies which reconstructed the past of their own lineage, often reaching back to the times of ancient Rome. Until then, however, the nobility of Moldavia and Walachia had never been particularly keen on genealogical practice. Its development in the nineteenth century helped define the identity of a specific Romanian community reaching beyond state boundaries, and founded on what were considered to be the linguistic, hence historical, roots of Romania: the language and civilization of ancient Rome.⁵⁰

Antiquarian scholars were similarly involved in this cultural trend, to which they added a series of archaeological 'sudden findings', such as the Celtic (or possibly Merovingian) monuments discovered in several French localities. Pierre Jean-Baptiste Legrand d'Aussy classified them carefully in a volume entitled *Mémoire sur les anciennes sépultures nationales*, published in Paris in 1799.⁵¹ In the same year, Neapolitan patriot Vincenzo Cuoco moved to Milan to escape persecutions following the fall of the Jacobin Republic of Naples. In 1804, while working as an officer of the Napoleonic administration, Cuoco published an epistolary novel called *Platone in Italia*. The book sought to describe the profound historical and cultural unity of the sundry Italian states, and invoked a political union of said territories through the narration of the common origins of the peoples who had inhabited Italy before the Roman Empire. In order to legitimize the authoritativeness of his account, Cuoco employed the topos of the 'sudden finding'. As he explained, the

⁴⁹ Thiesse, *La création des identités nationales*, pp. 106–07; Thiesse, 'The Formation of National Identities'.

⁵⁰ Iorga, *Strămoși pe alese* (we would like to thank Emanuela Costantini for her kind assistance). See Hitchins, *The Romanians*, pp. 114–40.

⁵¹ Grell, *Le Dix-huitième siècle et l'antiquité en France*, I, p. 758.

published text was the transcription of an ancient Greek manuscript discovered by his grandfather in the area of ancient Eraclea, in southern Italy, a place renowned for other (authentic) archaeological findings.⁵²

'National genealogies' constructed through linguistic and philological research, as well as through the instrumental use of alleged 'sudden findings', were also used to claim the greater antiquity of certain peoples as compared to others. This had happened in the case of Ossian, but would also occur in France, where, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 'Celtomania' became a powerful weapon in the cultural battle against England.⁵³ The nationalist aims of this genealogical production should be contextualized within the framework of the numerous fights for hegemony taking place in that epoch.⁵⁴ The critique of these new theories and discoveries only contributed to their wider circulation, and ended up reinforcing rather than dismissing the notions of kin ties and of a common descent of the European peoples. Sometimes, the idea of a common descent appeared as a continuation of traditional genealogical discourse centred on the history of Salvation, and on the idea that all world peoples were descendants of Noah and his sons, who had survived the Flood.⁵⁵ For instance, in his *History of Great Britain* (1771), Robert Henry claimed that the religion of the druids descended from that of the Jews via Gomer, son of Japhet, who was also the progenitor of the 'Celtic nations'.⁵⁶ Vincenzo Gioberti's *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, published in 1842, made similar claims. Gioberti supported the idea of a federation of Italian states presided by the Pope — a solution which, he believed, was faithful to the historical and religious traditions of Italy. Through the lens of Vico's theories, Gioberti devoted several pages of his work to the most ancient history of humankind, 'che comincia coi noachidi della Mesopotamia, e, colle propaggini iraniche, egizie, indiche e caldee dei giapetidi sottentrati ai semiti e ai camiti, finisce a occidente colla stirpe pelasgica d'Italia' ('which begins with Noah's descendants in Mesopotamia, and, through Japhet's Iranian, Egyptian, Indian, and Chaldean descendants, who took over from the offspring of Shem and Cham, terminates in the western territories, with the Pelasgian lineage of Italy'). Gioberti praised the language of Rome: 'il latino è un sermone pelasgico, probabilmente più vetusto del greco d'Omero, traente all'elico,

⁵² See Ceserani, *Italy's Lost Greece*, pp. 88–90; De Francesco, *The Antiquity of the Italian Nation*, pp. 29–50.

⁵³ Grell, *Le Dix-huitième siècle et l'antiquité*, II, p. 1123.

⁵⁴ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, p. 86.

⁵⁵ Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres*, pp. 61–84.

⁵⁶ Henry, *The History of Great Britain*, I, p. 92.

gemello del tusco, dell'osco e degli altri dialetti antichissimi della nostra penisola [...] quindi il latino si può avere per l'effigie più fedele che ci sia rimasta del primitivo pelasgico' ('Latin is a Pelasgian language, possibly more ancient than Homer's Greek; it is influenced by the Aeolic, related to the Tuscan, the Oscan, and other ancient dialects of our peninsula [...] hence Latin can be considered the most faithful image known to us of the primitive Pelasgian language'). Among other things, these notions addressed and opposed the alleged superiority of the 'nazioni celtiche e germaniche' ('Celtic and Germanic nations').⁵⁷

Parallel to these traditional models ran a kind of genealogical discourse seeking to demonstrate the common descent of peoples purely on the basis of philological and linguistic analysis. A key instance of this trend is the nine-volume work *Le monde primitif analysé et comparé avec le monde moderne*, published by Antoine Court de Gébelin between 1773 and 1782. Familiar with the most sophisticated research on comparative linguistics and recent philosophical theories, such as physiocracy, Court de Gébelin explored and compared different grammars, lexica, myths, and histories of peoples, with a specific purpose: 'uncovering the original language of the primitive world, the language which served as the origin and basis of a universal grammar through which all existing languages might be explained'.⁵⁸ In order to fulfil his objective, Court de Gébelin made ample use of the 'Science Etymologique', which he employed in order to 'mettre le sceau aux vérités que nous y proposons, pour en achever la démonstration, pour faire voir comment les Nomes même furent faits pour les choses' ('to seal the truths we are proposing, to demonstrate and show how nouns themselves were made for things').⁵⁹

As an advocate of the monogenetic theory, according to which all languages were descended from a single mother tongue, Court de Gébelin looked back to the work of scholars from previous centuries, who believed that this original mother tongue must have been either Hebrew, Aramaic, an alleged Adamic language, or even an ancient or modern language whose national and genealogical authority they sought to claim, as in the case of Olaus Rudbeck's celebration of the Swedish language.⁶⁰ The monogenetic theory on which these views were based was not

⁵⁷ Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli Italiani*, ed. by Balsamo-Crivelli, II, p. 297; III, p. 55; II, p. 161.

⁵⁸ Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, pp. 93–94.

⁵⁹ See Court de Gébelin, *Le monde primitif analysé et comparé avec le monde moderne*, VIII, tome I, pp. 14–15.

⁶⁰ Droxhe, 'Le primitivisme linguistique de Turgot', pp. 76–78; Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, pp. 73–116.

considered unreasonable in the eighteenth century, and was actually presented in a way that would look scientifically up-to-date and plausible to a scholarly community. This thriving research providing new comparisons between ancient languages and their *Volksgeist* did not undermine the theory according to which the whole of humankind descended from a single ancestor. To a certain extent, the situation was favourable to the discovery of a new mother tongue — the starting point of the genealogy of languages and peoples — through new secular and scientific reasoning, which would replace the biblical paradigm centred on Noah, by then universally rejected by scholars.

Philology and National Genealogy

The discipline of comparative linguistics honed its methodological tools between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the progress of its scientific research is independent from the genealogical theme which is the subject of the present essay, its development is important for our argument, due to the surprising similarity between the structure of comparative linguistics and that of genealogy.⁶¹

In a speech given at the Academy in Berlin in 1745, Johann Peter Süssmilch postulated the existence of a common descent for Oriental and Germanic languages, but without going so far as to hypothesize the existence of a single language that would have provided the common origin of these linguistic families.⁶² In 1786, Süssmilch's and other more recent theories were explored by William Jones, an English officer in India. In a famous speech published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* of Bombay, he demonstrated the existence of a close kinship between Sanskrit and other European and non-European languages (ancient Greek, Latin, Persian, Celtic, and Gothic languages). Jones theorized the presence of a single 'common source' for these languages and remarked on the 'wonderful structure' of Sanskrit, which he thought superior to ancient Greek.⁶³ Jones's ideas quickly reached Germany. In 1808, Friedrich von Schlegel stated that Sanskrit was endowed with the perfection and antiquity which made it a natural candidate for

⁶¹ See Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language*, pp. 13, 42; Auroux, 'Representation and the Place of Linguistic Change', pp. 214–15; Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes*, p. 224; Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, p. 105; Turner, *Philology*, p. 97.

⁶² Süssmilch, 'Réflexions sur la convenance de la langue celtique'; see Droixhe, 'Le primitivisme linguistique de Turgot', p. 77.

⁶³ See Jones, 'On the Hindus', pp. 34–35; Turner, *Philology*, pp. 93–98.

the role of first, original language.⁶⁴ While Napoleon's army was occupying German territories, Schlegel sought to claim the spiritual kinship between two 'pure' peoples — the ancient Indians and the Germans; indeed, the latter, according to Tacitus, had never bowed their head in front of their enemies.⁶⁵

In the following decades, Jones's and Schlegel's theories were studied and corrected. The grammatical structures of languages and their syntactic similarities were carefully examined, and the hypothesis that Sanskrit could be the first, original language was discarded in favour of another protolanguage, the Indo-European, which, although no longer extant, could be reconstructed.⁶⁶ The 'Science Etymologique' was generally left aside, but continued to be employed by some, including Danish philologist Rasmus Rask, one of the founders of the Indo-European science, and the author of *Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse* (*Essay on the Origin of the Ancient Scandinavian or Icelandic Tongue*, 1818).⁶⁷ Such linguistic theories became increasingly sophisticated. Their aim was the reconstruction of a common descent not for all world languages (as invoked by the monogenetic hypothesis), but only for those belonging to a single family, the Indo-European. It was also in the course of the nineteenth century that the peoples belonging to this family began to be called 'Arians'.

There was however an undemonstrated principle at the roots of these linguistic methodologies, which was also present in genealogical practice. Scholars believed that the first, original language had to be 'pure', and that the community who spoke it had initially been homogeneous. In time, one or more parts of this community had migrated elsewhere in the world and had 'corrupted' the original language starting different Indo-European linguistic families.⁶⁸ This theory was constructed and based on a genealogical model, as shown, for instance, in the so-called *Stammbaum* — the genealogical tree of Indo-European languages designed by philologist August Schleicher in 1861.⁶⁹ Schleicher drew inspiration from another discipline which had fruitfully employed the model of the genealogical tree to classify the subjects of its research; this discipline was botany as studied according to the methodology which Carl Linnaeus devised in 1735.

⁶⁴ Turner, *Philology*, pp. 129–30.

⁶⁵ Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes*, pp. 219–21.

⁶⁶ Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, p. 104.

⁶⁷ Turner, *Philology*, p. 132.

⁶⁸ Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language*, pp. 75–144; Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes*, pp. 224–25.

⁶⁹ Schleicher, *Compendium der vergleichenden Grammatik*, I, p. 7. See Turner, *Philology*, pp. 242–43.

As recently argued by James Turner, the philological method had aspired since the Renaissance 'to find historical origins in a very specific sense of the term: to uncover lines of descent leading from an ancestral form through intermediate forms to a contemporary one'.⁷⁰ Like linguistics, philology is inherently comparative and genealogical. However, genealogy was not only a method or useful instrument to organize specific phenomena; due to its long-standing function as a discourse used to legitimize social hierarchies, genealogy was an instrument of power. Greater antiquity signified greater nobility, purity, and superiority to others. Once systematically applied to the analysis of national character, through the use of history, myths, literature, and language, this instrument would have long-term effects in Europe.

Conclusion

In the course of the nineteenth century, universities and other institutions devoted to the publication of historical and literary sources underwent intense developments. New philological and linguistic methods produced editions of ancient and, most of all, medieval texts, which were designed to represent the historical and cultural foundations of European national identities. A case in point is the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, begun in 1819 by a community of scholars who adopted a meaningful motto: *Sanctus amor patriae dat animum* ('the sacred love for one's country fortifies one's spirit').⁷¹ Meanwhile, the fashion of the historical novel contributed to the identification of culture (language, literature, and history) and national character in Europe. In this context, the attribution to 'imagined communities' of new or revised national genealogies designed according to modern, scientific criteria but still imbued with hierarchical idealism, contributed to feed the aspirations for political emancipation of the European peoples. In Greece, for instance, the intense debate on the codification of a written, modern Greek language sought to 'rediscover' the peculiar elements of a national identity whose roots went back to antiquity, and which had been preserved during the centuries of the Ottoman rule.⁷²

But in the passionate intellectual environment of the time several texts were published which employed genealogical ideology to claim national superiority.

⁷⁰ Turner, *Philology*, p. x.

⁷¹ Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, pp. 15–40.

⁷² See Mackridge, *Language and National Identity in Greece*.

This leads us to the threshold of a new subject, to which we cannot do justice in this essay. We shall nevertheless address it as a conclusion to this argument on the persistence of the discourse of mythical genealogy at the end, and even beyond, the chronological period identified in the present volume as that of its greatest development.

The cases of Greece and Italy, with their obvious connection between nationalism and the fight for independence, highlight the liberal thought of the nineteenth-century movement of national construction, despite the more or less adventurous historical reconstructions of origins. However, the relationship between nationalism and ancestral history may point to the crucial importance of another aspect. The profound kinship — of intents, themes, discursive practices, and argumentative techniques — between the mythical genealogies dismissed by Voltaire and Gibbon and the historical works at the basis of Europe's Romantic nationalism, should encourage further investigation on the potentially conservative and reactionary view by which the legitimation and prestige of a nation should be rooted in a remote and mythical past. A study of this phenomenon can enrich debates on the distinction between a political definition of nation as 'a plebiscite that is renewed every day', in the words of Ernest Renan, and an ethnic definition of nation as a natural result of history.⁷³

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⁷³ An important contribution to this research field has been given by Banti's *La nazione del Risorgimento* and *L'onore della nazione*, which includes a close analysis of Renan's viewpoint (pp. 167–68). We would like to thank Alberto M. Banti for his comments on an early draft of this essay.

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